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Calvinist Contact

An independent Christian weekly

December 8, 1989 / 45th year of publication / No. 2191

Canadian Christians call for stop to Salvadoran killing

C.C. staff

TORONTO — Canadian Christians quickly protested the horrendous assassination of six priests and two women at Central American University in San Salvador, and the military bombardment of a heavily populated section in this capital city of El Salvador.

The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America called on its 17 member churches and church organizations to send telegrams at once to El Salvador's President Alfredo Cristiani and its ambassador to Canada to condemn the killings.

The murderers are members of "death squads" which act in co-operation with the military, says ICCHRLA. Human Rights violations have rapidly escalated since President Cristiani imposed a state of siege on the country November 12.

The anguish and outrage at these university killings are particularly strong in Toronto, where the Jesuit community has close ties with its brothers in San Salvador. A memorial service was held in Toronto on November 19.

In related action ICCHRLA sent a telegram to President Cristiani to stop the aerial bombardment of residential neighbourhoods.

ICCHRLA received an eyewitness report from a priest who said he will never forget seeing army planes diving and firing rockets into heavily populated areas of Zacamil and Mejicanos, suburbs of San Salvador. He said that the colonel in charge of the High Command lied when he stated on television the next night that the air force had not bombed and would not bomb civilian populations.

Reports from the scene say that the Catholic church is willing to provide food and medical supplies to the people, but the army will not let relief get to the churches in which the people are taking refuge.

Canadian Christians through ICCHRLA are asking that every effort be made to organize an immediate ceasefire so a negotiated settlement can end the 10-year civil war and the great suffering it causes the people.

Church must earn right to evangelize Indians

Thinkbit

Editor Arthur Plotnik to a writers' class: "Communication is your reason for being — not nourishment of ego, not praise of colleagues, not money, not love of generations to come. You write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you — and we edit to let the fire show through the smoke."

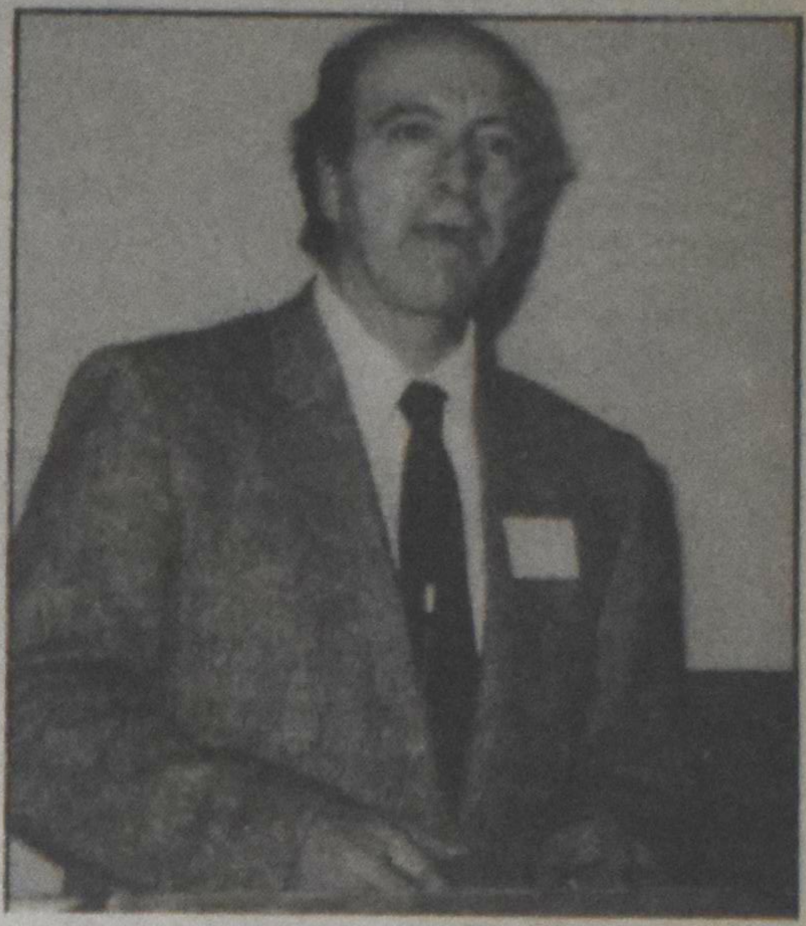

Photo: Robert VanderVennen

Rev. Stanley McKay, Jr., calls the church to be an inclusive community.

Robert VanderVennen

WILLOWDALE, Ont. — If it wants to share the gospel with Canada's aboriginal people, the Christian Reformed Church must take time to learn and affirm Indian culture, and not repeat past mistakes of white missionaries whose roots were in Europe.

This was the message of the Rev. Stanley McKay, Jr., a status Cree Indian and ordained minister in the United Church, to 50 CRC members meeting prior to the biennial meeting of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada.

In past decades the process of evangelization has been indistinguishable from cloning people to work in the white person's marketplace, said McKay. A turnabout from that was expressed by the United Church at its general meeting in Sudbury in 1986 when it confessed to Native people, "We imposed our civilization as a condition of your receiving the gospel."

In the 1840s, the Cree Indians received the Bible in their own language. It was a Pentecost experience, says McKay. It was unbelievable to read and hear the gospel in your own language, the same experience as those astonished people in Jerusalem who "heard the wonders of God in our own tongue," asserted McKay.

The first Methodist Conference between Edmonton and Winnipeg was an indigenous Indian church, McKay said. But in the 1880s that church was disrupted by immigrant church leaders who reorganized the Indian church to make it look like the churches they knew in northeast England.

The church needs to be an inclusive community, embracing converted people in their own culture, insisted McKay. But it takes time to be inclusive, just as it also takes time to be exclusive.

McKay gently raised the analogy of cross-cultural adoption. He knew that many Dutch immigrants from the love of their hearts have adopted Indian children. But the typical model of a generation ago was to try to make such children "just like us." Often that brought problems. The church, too, should not try to establish Indian churches that are "just like us."

'We didn't know their story'

Menno Wiebe, the second speaker at the conference, said he saw that there was something wrong when Mennonite missions among the Indians were the same as their missions among immigrants of Low German background. "I realized we didn't know their story," he said. "We only knew them well enough to preach the gospel to them." Wiebe, who like McKay is from Winnipeg, is director of the Department of Native Concerns of the Mennonite Central Committee.

See **STORY TELLING** — p. 2

Council of Churches closes out aid to SWAPO guerrillas

Paul De Groot

EDMONTON — The World Council of Churches (WCC) plans to end its grants to a black resistance organization in Namibia.

The WCC's grants to the Southwest Africa People's Organization have been attacked by the WCC's opponents as assistance to a terrorist organization. Some churches, such as the Salvation Army, have withdrawn from the World Council over the grants from the council's Program to Combat Racism.

But the WCC has maintained that its assistance to SWAPO was only for humanitarian purposes, and that the organization was an important part of the battle against apartheid in southwest Africa.

Other beneficiaries of the program include native groups in North America, including the Lubicon band in Alberta.

In a news release, the WCC said it will give SWAPO $165,000 this year, the largest grant ever given from its special fund to oppose racism. The funds will aid the disabled and children who have had to go abroad for their educations. It will also help wind down SWAPO's activities in Namibia, as it moves toward independence.

After that, SWAPO will no longer receive money from the special fund.

WCC General Secretary Emilio Castro said the council has also urged SWAPO to ensure that it does not violate the rights of others. Numerous reports of torture, brutality and even executions of innocent people by SWAPO guerrillas have prompted the WCC to demand "a clear commitment to the upholding of all human rights."

WCC support for the organization in the past was based on the perception that SWAPO "represented the aspirations of the people of Namibia," Castro said.

Regional synods for the Christian Reformed Church?

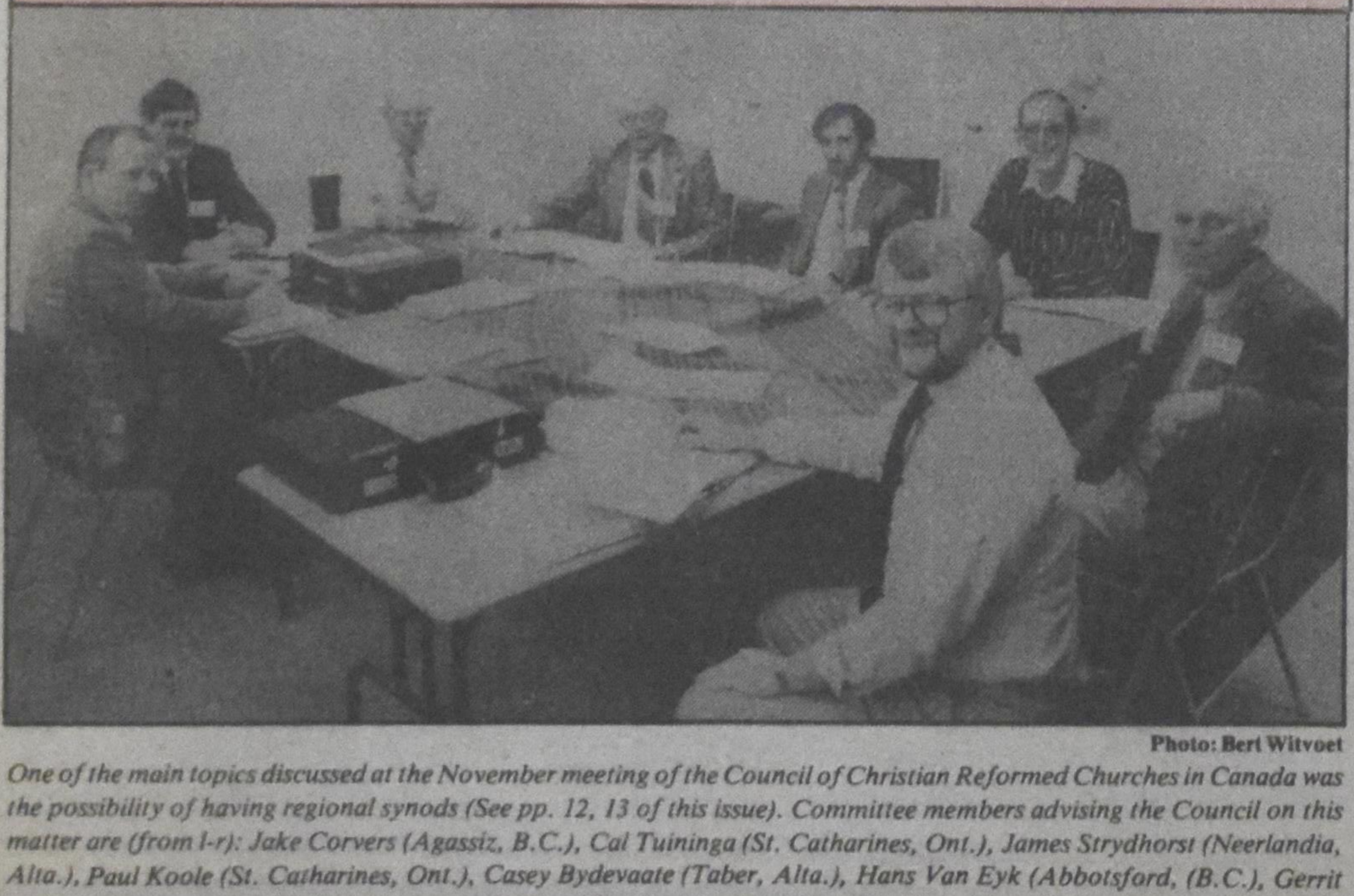

Photo: Bert Witvoet

One of the main topics discussed at the November meeting of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada was the possibility of having regional synods (See pp. 12, 13 of this issue). Committee members advising the Council on this matter are (from l-r): Jake Corvers (Agassiz, B.C.), Cal Tuininga (St. Catharines, Ont.), James Strydhorst (Neerlandia, Alta.), Paul Koole (St. Catharines, Ont.), Casey Bydevaate (Taber, Alta.), Hans Van Eyk (Abbotsford, (B.C.), Gerrit Hietkamp (Palmerston, Ont.) , and Gerrit Bomhof, Chairperson (Winnipeg, Man.).

In this issue:

Alice MacVicar describes going "Home for Christmas" in the early part of this century .... p. 10
The Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada calls for CRC regional synods at its biennial meeting .... pp. 12-13

Story telling relaxes tension

... continued from page 1.

So Wiebe went back to school to study anthropology and cross-cultural subjects. But he says that his real learning came from listening to the Indian elders. He learned that moving ahead does not come through adversarial debate but by consensus. At one time he was observing a bitter dispute among Indians, and finally an Indian elder came forward and said, "Manno." Let it be. Cool it! You can't settle it now, not this way. Some other time.

Stories are great Native ways of telling how it is. Storytelling relaxes the interpersonal tensions built up by living closely together through a long winter.

Stan McKay gave us the experience of the Indian circle. Everyone has a word to say. Everyone has a place, is acknowledged, is valued. It is an inclusive circle, a circle of life. A circle meeting will not likely have a specified chairperson, nor a pre-planned agenda. Decisions on what is needed and how to move arise out of the group.

McKay said that in the Indian village in which he grew up, all the people came together for community events. But they didn't come together on Sunday — there were two competing churches in the village. Truth seemed broken in two, and there seemed to be winners and losers.

The Indian way is inclusive. An Indian elder tells the story of the trees growing on the mountainside. The pine, willow and aspen all grow together. None asks why the others are there, and whether they should be. They just grow together.

The Indian worldview is different from the worldview of immigrants from Europe. If we bring the gospel to Indians, we will want them to change. But if we do that with integrity, says McKay, we will also change. There is no choice about that, just as successful neighbourhood evangelism changes a congregation. The conference made clear that the Christian Reformed Church in Canada should not do mission work among Natives unless it is willing to be changed by them.

Growing an Indian Christian

Robert VanderVennen

The Rev. Stanley McKay, Jr., grew up in a Methodist Indian village in Manitoba, a village whose name means "To Be Afraid." His parents and grandparents showed him that he could be both Native and Christian. But they were taken away to boarding schools, and later Stan was, too.

Stan McKay went to a Presbyterian boarding school with Native children from many Indian nations. They learned to get along with their differences. They all worshipped together at the school. But in the town where the school was located, the Christians were broken up into different churches.

A problem is that the Native children returned from school to their community ill-prepared to live there. Because their children were taken away, for example, the Natives did not learn parenting skills. In school the children were taught that being a good person meant sitting quietly, getting up when the bell rang, conforming to every rule. They got the feeling that society was upset by the variety expressed by different kinds of people.

Stan finished his theological education in Winnipeg. He then was asked to become pastor of the large Indian church at Norway House in northern Manitoba. From the 1880s to 1971 the church had only pastors who didn't know a word of the people. Everything the pastors said was translated into Cree.

When Stan arrived and the first consistory meeting was held, the church elders didn't know how to act. Now for the first time they had a pastor who could understand what they were saying! They couldn't talk so freely among themselves!

The church decided very soon that Cree pastors were needed. So they sought out promising candidates and saw to their theological training. Today Stan heads the Jesse Saulteaux Learning Centre in Winnipeg, a leadership training centre for Native Christians.

When he was pastor of various Native churches, Stan liked nothing better than sit with the elderly and ask, "How was it long ago?" They would tell him stories of the past, the wisdom of the people. He is now himself an accomplished teller of the story of his people to the newcomers in the land.

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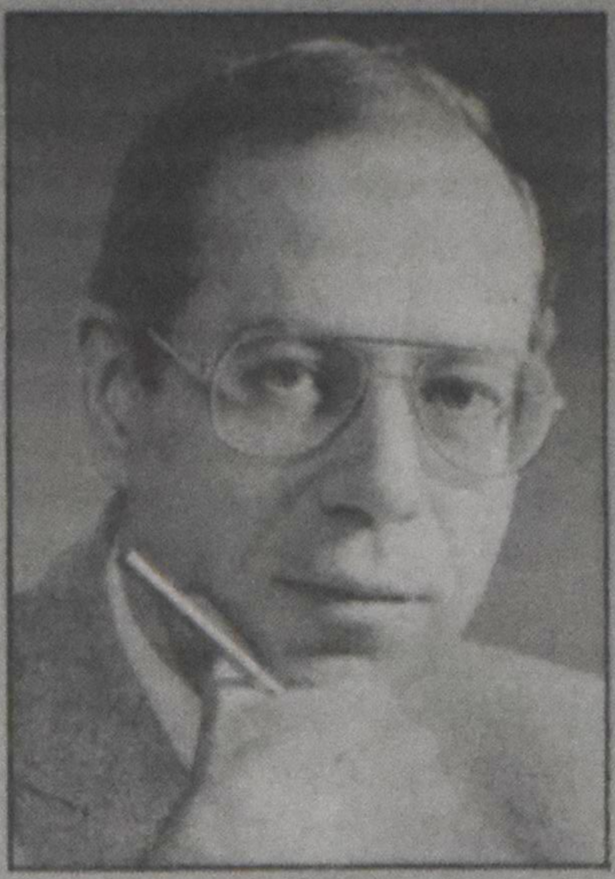
BETWEEN THE LINES

Socio-political comment by Syd Hielema, Clarence Joldersma, Jake Kuiken, Jim Romahn



Challenging conventional wisdom

Agriculture Minister Don Mazankowski's Green Paper on farm policy is a useful collection of conventional wisdom.

For example, many now realize that the farm policies we have pursued in the rich countries of the Western world have not been wise. Too much money has been wasted on farm subsidies.

"Wasted" is the proper term because we have produced too much food. Thousands of tons have been dumped outside of national borders — outside of the European Economic Community, outside of the U.S. and outside of Canada. That dumping has hurt farmers in other countries, particularly in poor Third World countries, because they have not been able to turn a decent profit. And "wasted" is the proper term because all of these billions of dollars have not been enough to lift tens of thousands of farming families out of relative poverty. In fact, rural poverty remains a blight in Canada, the U.S., the European Community and most nations of the world.

It has become conventional wisdom that we should be taking better care of our environment. And so the Green Paper agrees that we should cut back the use of pesticides and we should be doing more to reduce soil erosion and to keep our water clean, both our streams and rivers on the surface and our water under the surface.

Agreeing on the nitty gritty

There is general agreement among all Canadian farmers on such matters. It will not, however, be easy to win quick agreement when it comes down to specific measures to fit with that conventional wisdom — such as trashing some of the subsidies or policing some of the farmers who pollute the environment.

Farm opinion will be more divided on some of the other conventional wisdom in Mazankowski's Green Paper. For example, much of its optimism is built on hopes that world trade can be improved, mainly through the GATT negotiations to reduce export subsidies and import restrictions.

The Christian Farmers' Federation of Ontario is wise to point out that Canadian farmers do not have any realistic hopes of achieving major sales increases. Our production costs are high, so the prices we charge for our food must be relatively high. Only the rich can afford high prices, and most of them live in countries that are producing all the food they need.

The people who need more food are in poor countries that are already up to their ears in debt. Their most realistic hope lies in farm and development policies that will increase their domestic food production, not ones that will draw more food imports from Canada.

I agree with the current ideas about reforming domestic farm policies and reducing trade barriers, but I also agree with the Christian Farmers' Federation of Ontario that this is not the total answer.

And then there's the apparent truism that research and development will introduce a better future. Some people challenge that view and think we should turn away from pesticides, from drugs and hormones, from biotechnology and genetic engineering. I am not one of them. What daunts us are fear and ignorance. Every advance involves risks, so we need to be cautious. Cautious, but not paranoid, because every advance also presents tremendous opportunities for improvement. It's not the scientific knowledge we gain that's evil or harmful; it's how we apply that knowledge that can be harmful — or tremendously beneficial.

Beyond the private sector

What I find disturbing in the Green Paper is the Tory philosophy that virtually all government research and development should be married to projects or funding from the private sector. That's too narrow a view. The private sector is interested in marketing products and services; research and development should be bigger than that and should include advances that will improve our country, our people and our environment in ways that can't be measured in mere products and services.

One final point about the Green Paper. It is brave in drawing attention to the fact that farmers could be doing more to help themselves. There are big differences in how wisely and well farmers use their resources. There is a lot of room for improvement, particularly in the financial management end of farming. Too many farmers do not keep good records; even among those who do keep extensive records there are many who are not taking proper advantage of them. When it comes to improving family incomes, farmers have been too quick to complain to governments and not diligent enough about tackling their own books.

It's not easy, coping with Adam's curse, sweating to bring forth harvests from the earth. But it can be done.

Jim Romahn is farm editor for the Kitchener-Waterloo Record *and lives in Kitchener, Ont.*

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl

Monsieur gets around, doesn't he? Hardly back from Moscow where he singlehandedly erased the government's White Paper on defence, and he was off briefing President Bush on what to expect during the floating summit. In between those high octane meetings he saw the abortion bill pass second reading in the House. Cabinet ministers were told to toe the party line while the back-benchers were given free reign and allowed to vote according to their consciences. The consciences of cabinet ministers were turned off like like the thermostat on the air conditioner.

★★★★

Another minister who hit the road was Alberta's Peter Elzinga who has the Development and Trade portfolio. He was in Thailand and South Korea drumming up business for Alberta's exports.

★★★★

From Bona Vista to Vancouver Island you could hear the citizens grumble when it became known that the Federal Business Development Bank had financed a lot of those places where women shed their clothes like snakes in their rites of passage. Strip joints, I mean. One of those establishments was in Hull near a huge federal office complex, and the owner said that civil servants working in that building were an important part of his clientele. The Minister of Industry, Harvie Andre, said it was a mistake. Oops!

★★★★

In 1988 Canada bought $156 million worth of goods from the Soviet Union, but we sold the comrades $1.1 billion. More than $900 million of that was wheat, but they still have to stand in line for bread in Moscow.

★★★★

Statistics Canada reported that the annual inflation rate fell to 5.1 per cent in October from 5.2 per cent in September. And which province you think will have the strongest economic growth in 1990? Ontario, you say? Wrong! Quebec? Wrong again! The conference Board of Canada says it will be Saskatchewan. P.E.I. is predicted to have the slowest rate of expansion.

★★★★

Our favourite socialist retired from the leadership of the NDP. A tip of the hat from this place for an honest, hardworking politician. Maybe Broadbent can start wearing his beloved corduroy pants again. The NDP is in search of a policy, like sailors seeking landmarks in a fog. The party has left its proletarian roots and gone in search of a kinder and gentler middle class respectability which has cost it dearly.

★★★★

The London (Ont.) local race relations committee wants the sponsors of the recently held Santa Claus parade to apologize. Black residents of London were offended by Black Peter. Well, you can't win them all.

★★★★

And there is news in the area of new hermeneutics. A Quebec Roman Catholic bishop's report states that the church must share the blame for wife beating. It means, said Constance Middleton-Hope, president of the Federation des Femmes du Quebec, that it is no longer OK for theological and religious reasons to beat your wife. Now there is radical theology for you. Imagine! There was another shocking statement emanating from La Belle Provence: Parizeau said that Quebec will be an independent state before the year 2000.

★★★★

Seven months and counting toward the Liberal Turner-successor contest. It is said that Jean Chretien has it all wrapped up. I don't believe it. A lot of things can change in seven months.

★★★★

By order in Council, John Le Blanc was appointed chef at 24 Sussex at a salary between $44,000 and $50,000. Can he cook *boerekool*, though?

★★★★

There aren't any hard core, old style communist countries left, are there? Three,maybe: Rumania, China and Albania, if that country still exists. I haven't read or heard anything about it in at least two years. People powers brought down Communist Party monopolies in Czechoslovakia and Hungary and East Germany. The newly gained freedoms do not come without a price. Hungary saw a 15 per cent hike in the cost of consumer goods, and decadent capitalist McDonalds will open the world's biggest hamburger joint, with a seating capacity of 900 people, on Gorky Street at Puskin Square. A sign of the times, I tell you.

★★★★

Western leaders, stymied by the sudden political changes across the Atlantic, are continuing NATO's course steady as she goes for lack of new insights. Only West Germany's Chancellor Kohl showed some political creative savvy with a proposal for a federated union between the two Germanys. Trouble is that many people of my age, especially those in Europe, could still hear the pavement pounding with jackboots in his proposal.

★★★★

Gorbachev did another of his heart-warming tours in the eternal city. The Romans went ape over Gorby. Gorbachev visited Italy on his way to the floating summit.

★★★★

The Ghandi family lost its political grip on India. Renee Mouawad never had a chance to get a grip on Lebanon's chaos. A car bomb snuffed out his life. The ultimate target of the bomb was the accord between Lebanon's Muslim and Christian factions reached last month in Taifi, Saudi Arabia. The bloodshed in El Salvador continues.

★★★★

When the OPEC countries try to reach an accord it is like sailing straight against the wind. No chance. Accord between those countries is as rare as a beard on a woman. As soon as some agreement has been made, one country or another sets its own production quota and determines a different price.

★★★★

And that ancient, staid Mother of Parliament, the British House of Commons, finally let the TV cameras into its hallowed halls. Now Mrs. Thatcher and the MPs will have to spend even more time at their hairdressers.

★★★★

Two of Stalin's letters sold in London for $36,000. And we didn't even know he could write.

★★★★

And this: When you can't think of anything to say, don't try. The world needs more people like you.

Carl D. Tuyl is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Kingston, Ont.

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Editorials

The Saviour's country is bleeding

The news that six priests were killed in El Salvador by what appears to have been a government death squad only highlights what has been wrong in that country for many years. Any attempt to relieve the suffering of the oppressed gets interpreted as an act of rebellion and treason. A right-wing dictatorship stays in power through the use of violence by the military, generously funded by the United States.

The excuse used by President Reagan and his officials is that a left-wing rebel force funded by communist countries is trying to overthrow a government that is friendly to the economic and military aims of the United States. The picture that emerges from the White House is typically black and white — the struggle is between the forces of good and evil. The superficiality of that notion became transparent when President Reagan called the rebels terrorists when they supposedly held a group of U.S. military advisors captive in a San Salvador hotel. As it turned out, the rebels had stumbled onto this U.S. contingency, but had no intention of harming them.

Why must the U.S. government turn a blind eye to injustice when the question of left versus right comes into the picture? After the weakness displayed by communist systems in Eastern Europe, one would think that the spectre of Marxism had lost much of its power to scare. What kind of threat does a leftist rebel force pose to the rest of the continent? Is it better for El Salvador to be kept down by an obviously corrupt right-wing regime? Isn't it for Salvadoreans to decide how they want to run their country? Or is it a matter of pride for the U.S. that it cannot tolerate that its will gets thwarted, as an angry outburst by Bush against Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua at the last meeting of the Organization of American States seems to suggest?

So much pain and so much injustice in a small country named after Jesus the Saviour. How can an American government which calls itself Christian not use its influence for the Saviour's cause of justice and accept the political and economic risks that come with being righteous instead of to the "right."?

BW

Money for strip clubs perfectly legal

The federal government has been severely criticized by the opposition for granting loans to establishments that feature exotic dancers and strip-tease entertainment. A wave of righteous indignation swept over the Liberal and National Democratic benches. The government quickly acknowledged that a mistake had been made and that the practice would be halted immediately by tightening the criteria for business loans.

What was remarkable about this little exchange was that nobody seemed to want to argue the matter. Everyone assumed that lending money to strip clubs was the wrong thing to do. At the legal level there should not have been any criticism, however. Bars that feature exotic dancers stay entirely within the law. Lending money to a legally operated establishment is therefore entirely correct.

In fact, a strong economic argument could be made for supporting the granting of loans to strip bars. These businesses pay taxes and employ people, who in turn pay taxes. Why all the fuss?

Because everyone immediately realizes the political impact of such a loan extension. Government loans are seen as acts of approval. The majority of Canadians do not approve of strip clubs; therefore, loans must not be extended to businesses that do not have popular approval.

However, there is a fair bit of inconsistency in this kind of reasoning. Government policy should not be decided on public approval but on the basis of law and justice. The question that the government should face is not whether strip bars should be given an economic boost through a loan but whether they should be legal in the first place.

We believe they should not. These places breed immorality by displaying women (mostly) as objects of sensual and vicarious gratification for men. The struggle for the dignity of women, who have often been reduced to the level of object, *and* for the dignity of men, who too often have been lowered to the level of visual rapist, is difficult enough without a lewd display of flesh that passes for entertainment over lunch or a glass of beer.

If it was so easy to decide that the business development bank should not extend loans to clubs that employ nude dancers and sponsor other erotic activities, why could the House of Commons not move just as quickly on the closing down of such establishments?

BW

Letter

More letters on pages 5 and 6

Blames freedom *from* religion for Canada's ills

The two articles of Mr. Adrian Guldemond: *"Religion in the Public Schools"* and *"Religion in the Court"* (C.C. November 10 and 17) indirectly point at a basic weakness, if not a serious fault, in the Canadian governmental and political system.

What we originally wanted was freedom *of* religion. However, to appease conflicting multicultural interests, what we are getting is freedom *from* religion.

Nevertheless, when November 11 comes around, the nation seems to be once again united upon biblical principles: Catholic, Jewish and Protestant chaplains grace the ceremonies at the Ottawa war memorial. Religion apparently is still good for the dead (who belonged to a more demanding culture), but has become an embarrassment for the living.

Religion in the public schools, abortion on demand (my daughter is 16; she needs my signature for her passport application, but no signature for her abortion), Sunday shopping, the actual purpose of so-called Liquor Control Boards, rights to Natives (they are and remain wards of the Crown), affordable housing, prostitution, pornography, production of XXX-rated video cassettes, the vagaries of our judiciary system and corresponding parole boards, the persistent lack of adequate management of our non-renewable resources, waste disposal, etc., etc. — all these issues are being kicked around by seemingly professional incompetents, because tackling these problems would cost money and votes, so why bother?

We lack direction — and all this under the cover of "multiculturalism." The whole situation reminds me of what has been said of the decline and fall of Greek civilization (where reproduction was finally left to the failures): "Most great civilizations fail in the end from the defects of their virtues and Athens failed mainly from placing too great a trust in the intelligence, which turned from the clarifying of great issues to undermining their assumptions."

Bruce Bokhout
Don Mills, Ont.

GUEST COLUMNIST

A friend's birthday ...

Larry Harvey

"Lock Up! Lock Up!" came the cry down the range, and the bang-click, bang-click of the heavy steel doors reinforced the order. Another day gone. As I glance at the calendar I notice that today was the last day of November.

It snowed last night and the cell-block is getting pretty cool, so I guess it's that time of year: another Christmas in the joint. Oh boy! In most places in the world Christmas is special. Unfortunately, here it's just another day as the locked-up men try to block out their memories.

For me, though, the last half of this year has been different and I will have a different sort of CHRIST-mas. Having accepted Christ into my life this past summer has deeply affected me and how I do time in prison.

I *thought* it was all supposed to be smooth sailing once you become a Christian. But it hasn't been Easy Street. I've plunged from moments of strong insights and the joy of sharing with the Holy Spirit to deep depression, doubts and frustration. I guess that's why they call it Christian "growth."

Anything that grows, in any aspect of life, must change in one form or another, and change means growing pains. I used to think that a Christian's life was flat, bland and boring, but I was mistaken. A Christian way of life can be exciting, deeply fulfilling and, yes, fun! Even in prison.

Looking forward

I just knocked out 23 years in places like this and if I had opened my eyes earlier, maybe I wouldn't have had to do all this time. I'm not saying that I trip into this cell every night whistling and singing; I don't. Things still get on my nerves and the coppers still get on my case. It's just a lot easier now. I have far more to look forward to and I feel better about life. But don't let me sell you a bill of goods. I invite you to try it yourself. All of us hard-headed characters have to learn that way.

So as I look at the calendar and let my mind tumble freely about December 25th, this year I see a special friend's birthday. And to anybody who asks, "What's so special about him?", I'd like to inquire, "Do you know anybody else whose birthday the world has celebrated for 2000 years?" Must be a pretty special dude. And he *is*!

To all our families, friends, the volunteers who come into our groups and hearts, to our brothers and sisters locked up in other prisons, jails and hospitals, I and all the Christian brothers here at Collins Bay Penitentiary send out our best wishes and greetings at this special time of year. May God bless all of you with peace and understanding.

Larry Harvey is a prisoner in Collins Bay Institution, Kingston, Ont.

Longer Letter

Guldemond says views misinterpreted

I am rather disappointed by the misinterpretation of my views evident in Mr. VanderVennen's editorial (C.C. Nov. 17). The two headings, "The myth of a general Christianity will be shattered" and "State schools should not be used to teach religion," were *not* in the articles I submitted to C.C. in September.

Further, nowhere in the two articles do I say that "religious education should be banned from public schools in Canada." It is my view that Regulation 262, which authorizes special courses in religious instruction, should be removed from the Ontario Education Act because it violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. My articles were designed to explain the September court case around that regulation and Elgin County in the hope that the arguments in the case would show just what is going on inside the public school establishment.

Nor did I say that public schools should be denigrated in order to promote Christian schools. I believe, along with many others, Christian and *non-Christian*, that the public school system needs major reforms. One of them is the affirmation of the principle that the public interest (education) can be served by several different school systems. Presentation of the *political* role played by Regulation 262 is one step on that road of school reform which will benefit *all* students in Ontario.

It would be tragic for the gospel of Christ if churches were to once again support an outdated status quo. I agree with Bob that "our views should be argued in a manner that treats with integrity the views of those we believe to be wrong." Perhaps he could do likewise and stick to the Elgin County court case issues. The last part of my second article (p. 12) directly contradicts what he claims I said.

I know that it is easy to confuse the Elgin court case with the Watson Inquiry, but my articles really only deal with the court case.

At the November 13 meeting between the Christian Reformed Church and the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS), it was agreed that no further statements on this matter would be made until the Watson Inquiry releases its final report. At that time there will be adequate consultation among the organizations in order to avoid further confusion on a vital but complex issue.

Adrian Guldemond
Executive Director, OACS

Reply:

Since Adrian Guldemond has written a number of recent articles on religion in public schools, there seemed to be no reason why I should restrict my editorial comments to what he wrote for *Calvinist Contact* or to the Elgin County court case.

His position seems strikingly illuminated by the opening words of his September article in *Ethics in Education,* where he wrote, "Religious education should be banned from public schools in Canada."

It is correct that Dr. Guldemond did not say that public schools should be denigrated in order to promote Christian schools. But then, I didn't say that, either. Whether he does denigrate public schools in order to promote Christian schools can be decided by people who read his writings.

The headings to which Dr. Guldemond objects (which were placed in his articles, not in my editorial) were written by the editor in the standard practice of trying to focus the writer's viewpoint in order to heighten reader interest."

Robert VanderVennen

True freedom from only one source

I was at a social gathering some Sundays ago when the letter "Abortion is a woman's issue" (C.C. Oct. 20) came up. I had not read it and when I came home later that evening to study it thoroughly, I was struck by Timah Black's statement: "I believe that freedom of choice can lead only to a better understanding of humanity and a more profound love towards our brothers and sisters in a world community."

As I repeated that sentence to myself my first reaction was, "Nice words, but what do they really mean?" Then the realization came to me that this statement was not unfamiliar, but rather identical to the words spoken to our first ancestor at the dawn of history.

Satan told Eve, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" The reply being that they might not eat of the tree in the middle of the garden or they would die. Satan answered, "You will not die .... Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Free choice, wrong choice?

Yes, Adam and Eve chose freely and, yes, their eyes were opened. We know the disastrous results. Hardly the beginnings of a loving community. And so I address you, Timah, through this letter.

Do not allow yourself to be fed by words that the world so freely offers us and which seem so innocently good.

You say near the end of your letter that "true love is that which sets us free and allows us to be who we are meant to be." That love is the love of Jesus and real freedom is only found in him. He restores us to who we are meant to be.

Therefore, freedom does not have its source within *us,* nor does it come when we free ourselves from the stranglehold of paternalism. It is for freedom that Christ saved us (Gal. 5:1); but do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature (Gal. 5:13).

And so we must serve one another in love. In I Cor. 13 we read that love *protects.* We all need protection — women, men, children, and the unborn (who are the most vulnerable of all).

Your final words, "I am a woman. Let me stand alone before God," saddened me. My prayer is that you need not stand *alone* before God but that Christ your Saviour will be there by your side.

Nell Vanturennout
Dundas, Ont.

Cast down all idols

Both Dr. VanderVennen and Rev. Peter Nicolai advocate [that] science [should] sit in judgment of the Bible. Really, we should not care about the issues facing science. If a lack of understanding of science is a problem, it is on scientists' part.

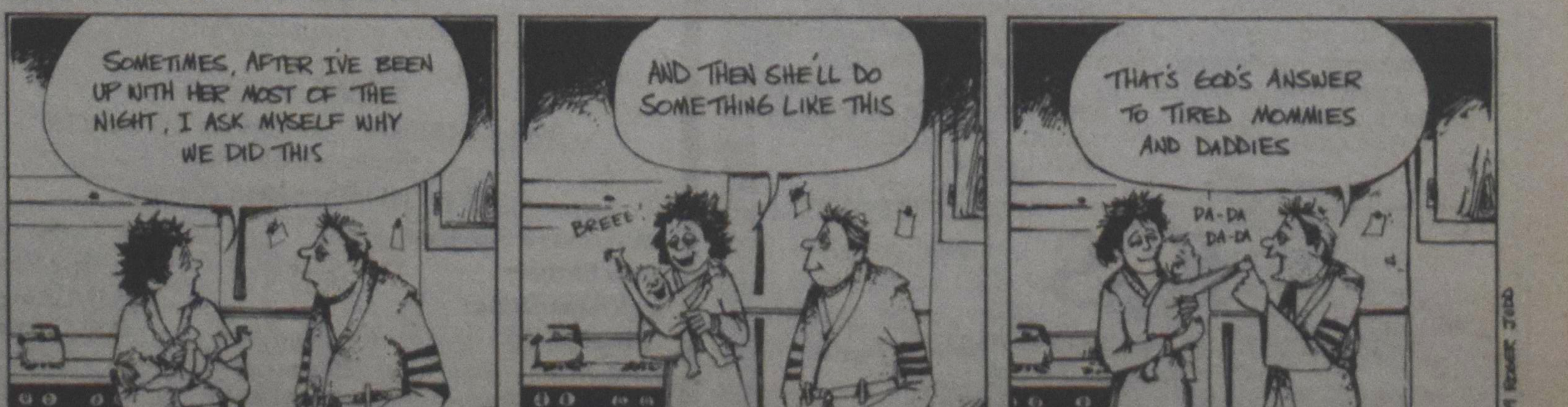
Science is the work of human hands and should not be another authority next to God for which we are asked to bow down. Indeed, we are unwilling to learn and listen, and so is Dr. VanderVennen, because he repeats pretty much what he said two-and-a-half years ago. Should we not fight evolution because people will find other idols? Whether evolution or science, we will cast down all idols. Apparently Dr. VanderVennen has seen one idol totter. These men should repent and start to obey God's Word.

I believe in the priesthood of all believers. We have an unction from the Holy One, whereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. We need no scientist to interpret God's Word for us. He that knows God hears us.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Dr. J. Smits
Markdale, Ont.

BEYOND BELIEF



Letters

Ministry guidelines useless

The second editorial in C.C. Nov. 3 had a somewhat misleading headline: it would make us believe that any and all religion in schools is better than no religion.

Perhaps the arguments brought before the court by legal counsel for the Ontario government will clear the matter rather quickly. Their defence is based on the *harmless* effect the ministry's regulation, if allowed to stand, will have on the few students exposed to a mish-mash of religions put before them.

Dr. VanderVennen should not try to make us believe that we keep public schools Christian by retaining this disputed regulation.

Dr. Guldemond, director of OACS gives a clear view of what the court case is about, and why Christian schools have no interest in this court case.

Again we experience that our people pass each other like ships in the night; no serious consultation takes place between organizations before someone decides to speak for us in the courts or elsewhere.

It doesn't seem to register with our appointed church leaders that we do have professional organizations in education, farming and labour, each and everone well-experienced in government relations in their own field, and having a clear understanding of what we are up against.

If the CRC and other churches are really concerned about what is being taught in the public school, let them study the matter seriously and inform their members about their findings. Perhaps then they will give true leadership.

Dirk Brinkman
Bowmanville, Ont.

Pray for, don't gossip about, stumblingblocks

In "Commentary: PTL scandal ends with a whimper" (C.C. Nov. 10), Doug Trouten suggests what might be the four greatest tragedies in PTL's downfall.

I think a greater one is those people who were considering becoming Christians but for whom PTL and Jim Bakker became permanent stumblingblocks. "A brother (sister) offended is harder to be won than a strong city" (Prov. 18:19).

Although Satan tempts me with "What's the use?", I pray for people like Bakker and Morgentaler. After all, their old nature and depravity are no different than my own. God does the impossible. He did it in the murderer on the cross, in St. Augustine, John Newton (author of "Amazing Grace"), and he does it in the likes of you and me!

May bad news always drive us to bended knees rather than to gossiping tongues!

Peter Tensen
Brantford, Ont.

Face to face with the Dutch queen

It was a beautiful afternoon when my wife and I were window shopping in The Hague, Holland, this early summer. We stopped at one window and enjoyed looking at some magnificent jewelry.

When we decided to continue our shopping, the door opened and out walked the lady whose beautiful smile is printed on all Dutch money and postal stamps.

We had never seen the Queen of Holland before. She was very young when we immigrated to Canada in 1948. But we did remember when she was born.

I remember we were dancing around the Queen Wilhelmina tree and singing every song we knew having to do with the House of Orange. The next day, there was a thanksgiving church service in the big Westerkerk, which had been built before William of Orange was born.

Throughout the ages many services have been held there for the House of Orange. One very significant service was held on May 21, 1572, when Enkhuizen was the first city of Holland to be liberated from Spanish occupation.

Another special service was held for new-born Princess Beatrix on January 31, 1938. The Rev. Bik, a Lutheran Minister, conducted the service. I remember how he stepped into the beautiful pulpit overlooking the cathedral-sized church filled with people, and how, as always, he preached a spellbinding sermon.

I will never forget his outstanding prayer of thankfulness for the new-born princess. He asked the Lord to be with her all the days of her life and asked that she would daily bend her knees and pray for the blessing of her people, that she might become a mother for the fatherland.

So when I saw the Queen face to face, all the memories of what happened 51 years ago came back to me.

K. Mazereeuw
Mississauga, Ont.

Photo: C.C. files
Queen Beatrix

For the record

Re: "Christian educators in B.C. happy with new school law" (Oct. 27)

Thank you for the well-written article on the changes in law for independent schools in B.C. We appreciate the coverage you gave.

However, I would like to correct for the record one item contained in the second paragraph.

The new independent school act is not our first time there has been a separate act for independent schools. The first act was passed for us in 1977 when the Social Credit government gave us partial funding.

Fred Herfst
Executive Director
Federation of Independent School Associations
Vancouver, B.C.

Practice praying more

I read the letter from the man with his smoking problem in Peter and Marja's column (Nov. 10), and the answer you gave him. You know, there is one problem in Christian Reformed circles — you never advise people to pray to their Lord for help.

I left the CRC about six years ago and have found a real fellowship in the Alliance Church. When you have a problem there, you confide in the men at the prayer meeting, and they stand around you and lay their hands on you and pray for you. And they continue to pray even at home.

I wish CRC families would have a similar setting where prayer is not done by Dad alone. I could tell you every prayer my dad would pray before or after a meal, because he was brought up that way, and so was I. I never taught my children to pray at the table, and now that they are married and have their own children, they have a hard time doing it.

Theo Van Geemen
Surrey, B.C.

SPEND AN EVENING AT ICS THIS WINTER!

THE EMPOWERMENT OF SELF IN COMMUNITY: ISSUES IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Mary VanderVennen, *Therapist, Christian Counselling Services*
Diane Marshall, *Therapist, Institute of Family Living*
James Olthuis, Ph.D., *Professor, Institute for Christian Studies*

Beginning with the conviction that the empowerment of self in community is the purpose of psychotherapy, this seminar intends to deal with a variety of issues that emerge in the practice of counselling. The aim of the course will be to create a forum, in which, from a biblical perspective, to explore theories, share experiences and develop strategies to enhance our ability to engage in the ministry of encouragement and healing.

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George Vandervelde, Ph.D., *Professor of Systematic Theology*

The aim of this course is to explore the communal dimensions of spirituality. Questions to be examined include the relationships of charismatic renewal to church renewal, charismatic gifts to professional leadership in the church, the role of women and men in ordained ministry, the task of the church in the face of the needs within and outside immediate community, and the unity and brokenness of the church at the local level.

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Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

Prancer

Rated Family
Stars Sam Elliott, Rebecca Harrell, Cloris Leachman, Rutanya Alda, John Joseph Duda, Abe Vigoda
Written by Greg Taylor; directed by John Hancock

Prancer is this year's family Christmas movie. As such, one would expect it to be idealistic and sentimental, full of what secular society likes to call the "Christmas spirit"; i.e., everyone puts away their petty disagreements and major dislikes so that when they visit seldom-seen family members for this "family holiday" they can all tell each other, "Ain't life grand!"

Prancer is sentimental and idealistic, but in a considerably less noxious way than most television Christmas fare.

The story concerns the feisty and imaginative eight-year-old Jessica Riggs (ingenuously played by newcomer Rebecca Harrell). Jessica has a belligerent adolescent brother (John Joseph Duda) and a tight-lipped widowed father (Sam Elliott), making things none too friendly around the house and eliciting a lonely independence from Jessica.

They live on a farm surrounded by wooded bluffs and near a one-stoplight town where everyone still goes to church and knows their neighbours. (*Prancer* was filmed in northeast Indiana and Three Oaks, Mich.) When on the way home from school Jessica happens upon a wounded deer in the woods (it's hunting season) she insists she has seen a reindeer. It must be one of Santa's, she surmises, since reindeer don't normally inhabit Midwestern woods, and she fancifully names it Prancer.

A few days earlier, when workers were putting up the town's Christmas reindeer, one of them had fallen and shattered. Jessica sees that and the live reindeer as signs that Santa is, indeed, alive and well — and missing one of his reindeer.

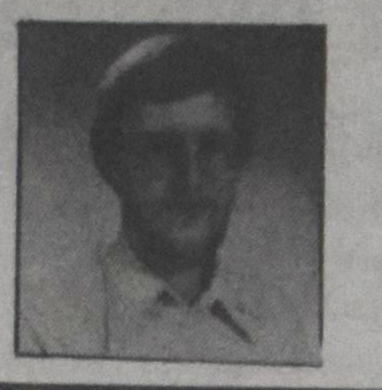
The rest of the film concerns her attempts to nurse Prancer's crippled foot back to health, to convince her father and others of the true identity of the reindeer and to get him back to Santa on time for his Christmas deliveries.

She meets obstacles, of course, but in the end everyone rallies 'round her and the deer, reviving the town's communal Christmas spirit.

Though this film, unlike many in recent years, does not avoid the fact that Christmas is, or should be, associated with Christ's birth — the film incorporates Christian Christmas carols, a (public school) Nativity pageant and a Christmas church service — it caters to the dominant spirit in our society which prefers to define Christmas in terms of what might be called the "cult of Santa Claus."

In the absence of Christ the Real Miracle, miraculous powers are attributed to Santa Claus. It is Santa who is omnipresent and omniscient. He can be in ten million chimneys simultaneously; he can know the thoughts and desires of ten million or 100 million boys and girls at once. And he can instil kindness and compassion in our hearts, saving us from ourselves — if we believe in him.

Presumably Christian children are not taught that view of Santa Claus. And for those who aren't, *Prancer* is probably a film which can be seen and enjoyed without ill effects as a pleasant Christmas-time adventure story. In fact, a good reason to *see* it may be to initiate a discussion with children about our world's — their non-Christian friends' and neighbours' — view of Santa's place in Christmas celebrations and how that relates (or doesn't) to celebrating our Saviour's birth.



MEDIA SCAN

Henry Knoop

What's good on TV?

I often get frustrated when talking with people who are dead set against having television in their homes, or who are so frustrated with it that they'd like to throw it out the window. There's nothing good on TV, they say. It's a big waste of time!

Television, it's true, is the greatest baby- and adult-sitter of the 20th century. No other medium has captured our popular fancy and entertained us, as individuals and families, as much as television has. We spend thousands of hours in front of it each year.

Much has been written (also by me) about the dangers of too much exposure to television, the problem of shaping worldviews, being influenced by secular and materialistic values. This is as it should be. Most people come to television wanting to relax, wanting to be entertained. With defences down, they do not take the influence of television seriously enough.

Yet as a medium of communication, television has a focus in addition to entertainment; its other purpose is to provide information to viewers. This side of television, albeit a small part in programming schedules for most stations, is one that could and should be taken more seriously by frustrated viewers.

More than entertainment

I like to think of it as a legitimate viewing alternative, seldom a waste of time, and often on par with frequently touted "more worthwhile" alternatives. An hour spent watching one or more of these programs can be just as beneficial, if not more so, as reading a newspaper or magazine article on the topic. Perhaps the problem with "nothing good on TV" has more to do with where one is looking.

Viewers don't need anything special to access information-oriented television programs on their set. A good look through the TV guide reveals daily program offerings on the national networks. Most of these programs are suitable for family viewing, depending of course on the age of the children.

The national news offerings are perhaps a good place to start. Both networks offer early and late evening broadcasts which usually focus on significant international and national political and economic events and issues. Family viewing? Why not? As a high school teacher, I am often appalled at my students' ignorance of the world, country and province in which they live. True, parents might have to explain to their children the significance of events in Poland, East Germany, El Salvador, or Czechoslovakia, or they might have to explain the Goods and Services Tax issue; these can be valuable teaching opportunities for global and national responsibility.

"Backgrounders" to the news are programs such as CBC's "Journal," "The Fifth Estate," and "Monitor," or CTV's "W-5." These programs often devote from five to 20 minutes to a particular issue in the news, providing historical context and featuring interviews and commentary. Topics under study for a particular week's program are usually printed in TV guides so viewers can decide beforehand if programs are of interest. "The Journal," which airs Monday through Friday, attempts to inform viewers the evening before of topics to be covered.

Never boring

In addition to these "general" news and information programs, there are also a number of more specialized offerings. "Venture" (CBC, Sunday) has a focus on business developments in Canada which even a commoner can understand. "Marketplace" (CBC, Tuesday) is an information-packed half-hour of consumer information on various products with an emphasis on safety and value. "The Nature of Things" (CBC, Wednesday) is a one-hour science show covering a host of interesting topics, including environmental concerns. Finally, "Man Alive" (CBC, Wednesday) explores humankind's spiritual concerns in a fascinating half-hour focus on individuals and groups who live out their faith.

In addition to these national network offerings, many provinces in Canada have their own "educational network" available usually on UHF. TV Ontario, for example, provides a wealth of information in a variety of programming formats. University-level courses are offered on television for credit, and educational specials for students of all ages are often aired during the daytime and are taped by schools for their classroom use. Evening programs range from *National Geographic* specials and other nature shows to science programs, financial advice phone-ins, discussions on social and educational issues, and video highlights from the provincial and federal houses of parliament.

Television viewing does not have to be a waste of time. Used wisely, television has a lot to offer. That is, if you know where to look.

Henry Knoop teaches English at Ajax High School. He lives in Bowmanville, Ont.

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Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Near-death experiences confirm religious view

Paul De Groot

EDMONTON — The man dying of a heart attack on the treadmill in Dr. Maurice Rawlings' examining room was normal in wanting to live. What was unusual was his reason.

"Don't let me die," he pleaded. "I'm going to hell. Don't give up, doctor."

Rawlings at first treated the comments as those of a man saying strange things under great stress. But from this and other experiences with dying patients, Rawlings began to recognize that many people on their way through death's door were seeing things. What is more, many were seeing the *same* things.

In 1978, Rawlings published details of the "near death" experiences of about 300 people in the book *Beyond Death's Door*. He proposed that, based on the evidence of those who are dying, there is life beyond death.

Rawlings was not the first to provide scientific backing for an idea found in every major religion. In 1975, Dr. Raymond Moody's book *Life after Life* popularized scientific studies of the "near-death" experience.

Most accounts collected by Moody and others paint an idyllic picture of the departing soul viewing its lifeless body and eventually speeding down a tunnel or through space. The person often encounters relatives who have died, sees a world of great natural beauty, and eventually encounters an obstacle of some kind. At that point, as they face a wall or river, they return to their bodies.

Strikingly similar experiences

Many near-death stories are strikingly alike, lending support for the theory that they are not merely one person's experience. In addition, the accounts are more believable because the person can often describe details of which they could not be consciously aware. They will recall, often in vivid detail, events which occurred while they were clinically dead. Typically, they recall the comments, dress and other particulars of the medical personnel trying to revive them, which they report observing after they had left their bodies.

Moody's work was praised by death and dying expert Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and taken seriously by many in the scientific community. But often overlooked is one aspect which Rawlings, a heart specialist, says he has seen several times: people fighting death because they see not heaven, but hell.

That first patient never described his experience of hell, Rawlings said in an interview.

"He wouldn't submit to hypnosis about it. Either he doesn't recall it or he doesn't want to recall it."

While most near-death experts dismiss the notion of a hellish death experience, Rawlings says they tend to be psychiatrists and psychologists who see patients, often volunteers, well after the event. But he and others who have spent time in emergency rooms have watched people recoil from the future which awaited them after death, he says.

Not surprised at their destiny

Rawlings, a lanky, reserved Tennessean, says the near-death experience confirms some Christian beliefs and challenges others. No one, for example, reports seeing streets paved with gold, as is described in the heavenly vision of St. John. Many report walking across a beautiful meadow. On the other hand, some report seeing Jesus or the devil. The latter often takes the form of a human with a goat's head.

Whether they appear headed for a heavenly or a hellish afterlife, Rawlings said "they are usually not particularly surprised to find out where they are."

Needless to say, the near-death experience often results in startling religious conversions, Rawlings said.

"It's not a dream, because we recognize our dreams as dreams. People are so sure this isn't just a nightmare that it changes their lives completely."

"Many of them feel they were brought back to life for a reason. They can't live with [the way they lived before] and have a conversion experience overnight."

"Look upon this Lord of Peace ...": *Martin Luther on Christmas*

Divinity may terrify us. Inexpressible majesty will crush us. That is why Christ took on our humanity, save for sin, that he should not terrify us but rather that with love and favour he should console and confirm.

Look upon this Lord of Peace and your spirit will be at peace. See how God invites you in many ways.

He places before you a Babe with whom you may take refuge. You cannot fear him, for nothing is more appealing than a babe. Are you afraid? Then come to him, lying in the lap of the fairest and sweetest maid. You will see how great is the divine goodness, which seeks above all else that you should not despair.

Trust him! Trust him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation. To me there is no greater consolation given to us than this, that Christ became man, a child, a babe, playing in the lap and at the breasts of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort?

Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt, if you come to this gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save.

Relief volunteers leave for Montserrat

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRWRC) — "When I heard the appeal for volunteers I felt I was being given a chance to help," declared Gord Vreugdenhil of Frankford, Ont. He is one of eight Canadian volunteers who left Toronto on November 21 to help the needy victims of Hurricane Hugo on the tiny Caribbean island of Montserrat.

The others include Steven Brak, Matt Garside, Duane Hiemstra, Mark Hiemstra, Jack Tigchelaar, Ken Vander Wal and George Zondervan, all from Christian Reformed Churches in southern Ontario.

The volunteers from Ontario will join 20 others in Miami, Florida, who came from Christian Reformed Churches in Michigan, South Dakota and New Jersey. From there the group will leave to spend three weeks at hard labour on the island of Montserrat, population 12,000. In late September, Hurricane Hugo destroyed or damaged 75 per cent of the homes on this small British colony 27 miles southwest of Antigua.

The volunteers, all of whom have carpentry or construction skills, will concentrate on putting up rafters and roofs and repairing or reinstalling doors and window frames.

The Caribbean Conference of Churches and the government of Montserrat are co-ordinating the reconstruction activities with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), sponsor of the volunteers. CRWRC is the outreach ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, with relief and development programs in 26 countries of the world.

CRWRC is assuming responsibility for the group's transportation, food, lodging and necessary expenses.

The volunteers are taking some of their own tools and medical supplies, and their Bibles — as they thankfully offer their time and talents to help their neighbours in need.

Greatest shipment of Bibles to Soviet Union given go ahead

LONDON, England (EP) — In the last year the Soviet Union has granted permission for millions of Bibles to be shipped into the U.S.S.R. and territories it controls, but in an unprecedented move this September, Soviet officials gave Swedish Pentecostals permission to ship in 12 million New Testaments and Bible storybooks for children over the next five years.

The Swedish plan is by far the most ambitious venture by a church agency to date, according to a report by John Todd for News Network International. The Swedish project is a joint venture with the U.S. Assemblies of God, according to Jerry Parsley, Eurasia field director for the U.S. Assemblies of God. The two organizations are also working together to produce a revised Ukrainian New Testament.

The books will be produced in Stockholm for about 50 cents per New Testament and about $2 a piece for the children's Bible storybooks in full colour.

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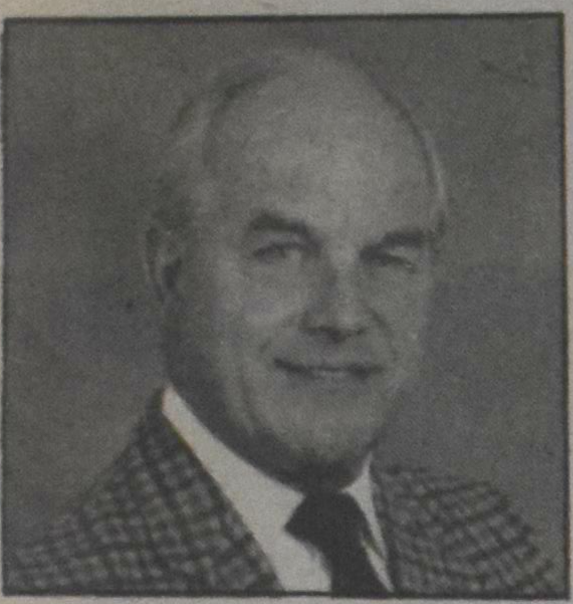

Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Thankful in all circumstances?

Jacob Kuntz

Though Thanksgiving Day is long past, important questions regarding our thankfulness are never out of date. *Christian Week* (Sept. 26) asked this question: "Can there be thanksgiving on the farm?" in view of the fact that farming has seldom been more difficult than now. The question did not receive a negative answer, but in the article, Christian non-farmers received a number of suggestions they can take to heart:

Perhaps we could begin to see changes ... if those of us who are city people spoke up more for farmers. I think we should be prepared to pay more for food, and we should insist that more of the final price of commodities should go to the producers.

We should encourage greater farm diversity. Family farms have worth and need to be nurtured. They are much more likely to practise mixed farming than the huge corporate farms. As long as there are enough family farms, rural communities can continue to exist. Dying communities across the prairies are testimony to the death of family farms.

We need something else, however. We need a recovery of an ethic of stewardship for the land. Many farmers have been able to stay ahead of the bankers only by working their land more and more intensively, fertilizing and spraying more, putting marginal land to use, removing potholes and bush lots. Land is a God-given resource which must be treated so that it can sustain us till the end of history. We cannot use it in a way that depletes its base.

I recall the sense of wonder that filled me when I walked on to a rich gardenplot in the Orient and was told this had been worked continuously for over a thousand years. If we are good stewards, our land can be farmed generation after generation. But not the way many farms are worked today.

I think we as Christians need to recapture a stronger sense of compassion for one another. Only rarely do we get to hear what it's like for many farmers. Few can talk about their struggles within a church setting. Few get actual help through their church fellowship. While there are groups like the Christian Farmers Federation and a few others who offer settings where these issues may be discussed, only a small minority have access to them. We need to create more ways to stand alongside our farmers.

The scriptures assert that the Lord is very concerned about the food we eat. Many of us pray daily for him to provide — and, indeed, we thank him for the food we enjoy. But we've forgotten the people who actually produce it. When we thank the Lord these days, let's keep on remembering them. They need our Christian support. Our fellowship in their struggles will make it easier for them to thank too.

The *Canadian Baptist* (October 1989) discusses thanksgiving in connection with the world's poor. It is troubled by the fact that we talk about them as "the less fortunate" and gives the following considerations:

It always makes me a bit sad when we speak of "those who are less fortunate than we are."

I began thinking about this during the publicity surrounding the African famine in 1984 and 1985. The pop song from England "Do They Know It's Christmas Time in Africa?" made its welcome plea to remember the starving. But it added the tell-tale line, "And thank God that it isn't you." That troubled me then; it troubles me now, at Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving teaching and prayers often follow this pattern:

1. A survey of how most of the world lives;

2. A reminder to value what we have, that is to be thankful or grateful, for salvation, certainly, but also for our standard of living;

3. An exhortation to remember "those who are less fortunate than we are."

The difficulty with that pattern is the notion that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who are "fortunate" and those who are not. A close look at the word "fortunate" makes me hesitate to use it, because it implies we have no responsibility towards the "less fortunate," and that none of the factors that account for the disparity between how we live and how most of the world lives are under our control.

Yet we cannot say that the situation people face in the world is totally beyond our control. Much of today's misery is either caused or made worse by North American and European consumption patterns, and business decisions that have a direct effect on the rest of the world. To say that "there's nothing we can do" or "it's not our responsibility," is to abrogate our responsibility to examine our economic system by biblical standards of justice.

I have no particular economic analysis to offer. But praying for those who are less fortunate is bitterly arrogant and wilfully blind unless we commit ourselves to learning about and addressing the root causes of poverty around the world and in Canada.

May I offer a slight amendment to our Thanksgiving pattern? How about if, in the course of thanking God for his Son, Jesus Christ, and for our salvation, and for our health and economic well-being, we also ask God to show us why most people have less than we do — and ask him to give us courage and the will to pursue a biblical standard of justice.

'Fortunate' people

The *Catholic Register* (Oct. 7) meditates about Thanksgiving in the following way:

By any standard, we in Canada are a most fortunate people. Despite the problems we may have as individuals and as a nation, and the real suffering of too many of our people, we live in one of the most richly endowed countries of the world. Our faith, our families and friends, the relative material prosperity so many of us enjoy, we need to get on our knees and thank the Lord for the many and large ways He has blessed us.

At this time of year, many parishes take up food collections for the inner city. Examples abound if we will seek them out. Both at home and overseas every community has groups that need help and Thanksgiving is a privileged time to respond. Large ways, modest ways, all are important and provide us with an opportunity to answer, each for himself, Christ's great question, "the other nine, where are they?"

Thanksgiving time is also *pumpkin time*. The *London Free Press* (Oct. 30) told the amusing story of one pastor who received his salary in the form of pumpkins — and more pumpkins:

Hearken to the tale of Rev. John Hodgson. The reverend gentleman in the early 1860s was Methodist minister at the old Gosfield charge in Essex county. Money then was scarcer than it is today; prevailing custom was for farmer members of the congregation to pay a portion (perhaps all) of the pastor's salary in produce.

Came a year when the pumpkin crop was more bountiful than ever — every farmer seemed to have them in generous quantities. And more than one was seized with the same thought — he should pay his quarterly share of the minister's stipend in pumpkins.

The rate was $1 a load.

The first load came and Hodgson said nothing. After all, he did like pumpkin pie and there was supply enough for many a meal — he thought of luscious pies which even good Queen Victoria might envy.

Came the deluge, load after load, until the cleric declared his barn and yard literally were piled with pumpkins. And that had started to rot and the odour was beginning to get annoying.

His liking for pumpkin pies began to fade. He vowed no more would be accepted.

Next day along came another of the congregation and you guessed it — another supply of pumpkins.

"No, No," said the cleric. "Take them away. My horse won't eat them, and a dozen will make all the pies we want." Harsh words developed.

It isn't clear what finally happened, but at the Methodist district meeting, a year later a resolution was adopted that every circuit must pay at least half its share of the church appropriation in cash, and that nothing must be forced on the minister he did not require.

Jacob Kuntz is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ont.

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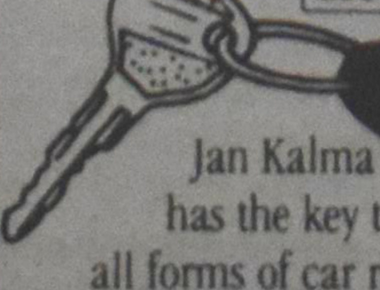

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Home for Christmas

Alice MacVicar

In '29 when I was in second year high school, I almost missed getting home for Christmas. As it fell on a Wednesday that year, the school closed for the holiday season on the preceding Friday, a bitterly cold day with no snow.

I used the short-cut through Saunder's mill yard to my rooming house. Inside, the other girls were snapping suitcases shut and opening them again to add some item they had almost forgotten in their haste to get home for Christmas. They departed in a flurry of "Good-byes" and "Merry Christmases" to Kate, the spry little owner of the rooming house. As the cold air surged in through the open door, they turned to me with a, "Wow, I sure don't envy your ten-mile ride by horse and buggy tonight." Then they were off in their waiting cars.

My suitcase packed, I waited impatiently by the window for my ride. I was getting a little edgy when the telephone rang sharply. It was my mother who explained that by some mishap, they couldn't come that night but would pick me up on Saturday afternoon. I covered my disappointment by telling Kate that I would have a little time for Christmas shopping.

Later that evening the wind softened and snow began to fall in great white flakes. When Annie, an older roomer, came stomping in shaking off snow, she announced, "I heard on the radio that we can expect four or five feet of snow this weekend." She must have caught my dismayed look for she added, "But I've never known the weatherman to strike it right. It will probably be all cleared up in the morning."

I tried hard to believe her but during the evening when I played crokinole with Kate, I made frequent trips to the window to see if the storm was abating. It wasn't; and that night I added a special line to my prayers. "Please God, let me get home tomorrow."

****

None of us was prepared for the amount of snow we saw in the morning. Annie's weatherman was right for once. The snow which was still falling thickly was above the foundation line of the houses. With the absence of cars, a strange white silence pervaded the outside world. Rooftops were piled so high with snow, they no longer had any shape. Only the chimneys emerged.

When I tried to ring home, I heard only the formal voice of the operator, "I am sorry, the rings won't go out on that line." I was at an all-time low when Kate suggested that I go down town to Hockin's store where many of the country folk did their shopping. Maybe someone from the valley might come in.

As I waded the short distance to the store, my overshoes became so heavy with the snow that had seeped into them that I was soon completely winded.

I found the store deserted except for white aproned clerks busily tying up small packages of raisins, dates, etc., on the grocery side. An occasional villager straggled in. As I sat by the pot-bellied stove in the centre of the store, I heard scraps of conversation: "This is sure going to tie up traffic for the holidays. None of the farmers will make it in today. Sure cuts down on the Christmas rush."

I pretended to be interested in some trinkets at the novelty counter but decided against buying, as I might need my dollar-and-a-half for food. The awful thought occurred to me that I might be storm-stayed all through the holidays.

Sunday was a gloomy day in spite of the bright sunshine on the dazzling snow. Some cutters with bells jingling on the horses' necks had come in from the country for church. I wandered aimlessly about my rooming house, reflecting momentarily on the grand and glorious confusion that would be going on at home. My sisters would be making green and red paper chains for the little spruce tree. My mother would be adding last touches to her freshly cleaned house. I went to bed early because there was nothing else to do.

Tuesday morning I made a last-ditch effort to phone home. The same voice answered, "The rings are still not going out on that line. The linesmen can't get out to make repairs." She must have caught the desperate urging in my voice for she added, "I'll open the switch and try once more."

Then a miracle happened. I heard my mother's voice say, "Hello, is the line in use?"

"Mom," I roared into the phone, "Don't go away. I've been trying to get you for days."

I've never quite understood how the connection was made but I was sure that God instead of the telephone company had made it. In a moment my mother was telling me the good news.

"Dave Carroll is in town with the sleigh to meet his sister Lydia at the station. He will be getting groceries at Hockins. He doesn't know you are stranded there so you'll have to keep a close watch." The connection was cut off but I had heard enough.

I literally flew into my outer wraps giving Kate some incoherent explanations and wondering why she was so dense about them.

"Well, for mercy sakes, button your coat or you'll catch pneumonia," she yelled at my fast retreating back.

In spite of the snow, I made it to the store in less than five minutes. Upon inquiring for Dave, I was informed that he had been there but had left about five minutes ago.

"Do you know where he was going from here?" I panted with a sickening feeling that I had missed him.

"Didn't Dave say he was going to the station?" Mrs. Perkins asked another clerk, who couldn't care less.

I took up my race again. I met the cartage man coming from the station in his sleigh. I waved him down to inquire if Dave were still at the station. He answered with a curt shrug, "He was leaving as I was pulling in."

Foiled again! Dejectedly I walked back to the store thinking some one else might turn up from the valley. To have missed by five minutes was bitter medicine. I listlessly examined items on the trinket counter again, but snapped quickly to life when I heard the proprietor tell Mrs. Perkins, "You can make up Dave Carroll's groceries any time. He's calling back for them this afternoon."

I had time to go back to Kate's to collect my luggage. She insisted I wear two of her sweaters under my coat. I felt like a stuffed bologna, but a happy one. Back at the store I had time to shop in earnest — some little manicuring sets for my sisters, 25 cents a piece. I really splurged on my mother's present: a very thin, pale green scarf, 59 cents. The two white handkerchiefs, 15 cents a piece, were for the men.

When Dave turned up I was more than ready to go. Lydia on the back seat of the sleigh, dressed in a fur coat and hat, reminded me of a Scandinavian queen. The hired man, his face reddened by the weather, teased that they had no room for an extra passenger.

"For heaven's sake, let's get going," remonstrated Lydia. "Can't you see neither of us can wait to get home for Christmas?"

I'll never forget the ride home. When the drifts were piled fence high on the roads, the men let down rail fences and the great horses took to the fields. Snowflakes gently swirling about us must have made a scene worthy of any Courier and Ives Christmas card. I recalled some lines I had learned at school: "How dreamlike is the world at dusk as the blue snow shadows fall."

Although conversation at the beginning of the trip ran high, we all lapsed into silence as we turned on to the Cowal sideroad. The horses kept their steady pace until they came to the hill that marked the beginning of our valley. Then they broke into a trot. They too were going home and couldn't wait to get there.

The men teasingly let the horses go right by our place until Lydia reminded them I was stopping off there.

"Don't forget to hang up your stocking," quipped the hired man after the parting "Merry Christmas." I could feel their benevolent, amused smiles even in the dark.

As I crunched through the snow toward the beam of light from the kitchen window, I glanced toward the twinkling star-filled sky and breathed a prayer: "Thank you, God, for getting me home for Christmas."

Alice MacVicar is a free-lance writer who lives in Strathroy, Ont.

The emerald sash (5)

Photo: Ed Vanderkloet
Protestant church, Bandung.

Ed Vanderkloet

From mountain plateau to coastal plain

After five days in Bukit Tinggi it's time to leave. A van takes me and a German couple to Padang, capital of central Sumatra, 80 km away on the coast of the Indian Ocean. The road leads through the famous Anei canyon where the steep, jungle-covered mountains tower 2,000 feet above us and the Anei River foams into rushing waterfalls and torrents of spray. Construction of the road and the railway through this gorge in the early 1900s was considered a marvel of engineering.

When the road finally flattens out we enter the coastal plain towards Padang. Like 40 years ago, the area is known for its immense coconut plantations with tens of thousands of tall palm trees waving in the ocean breeze. Padang is a busy town of close to half-a-million people, but because I spent only a few days there in 1949 I hardly recognize a thing.

The next day is Sunday, but I cannot find a Protestant church and the hotel staff are unable to help me. So I go to the Roman Catholic cathedral just across the road. The service is in Indonesian which made it mostly unintelligible to me. I had made the mistake of forgetting to take a Bible along on the trip. The Padang hotel has a beautiful Indonesian Bible (as well as the Koran, just to keep the religious balance intact, I suppose) but after half-an-hour of trying to read it, I give up. There is a great literary gulf fixed between the menu in the restaurant and the prophesies of Isaiah. The former I can read, but for the latter my knowledge of the language is all together inadequate.

On to Java

Monday morning I board an F-28 Garuda Airways jet to fly me from Padang to Jakarta. The trip takes only a little over two hours. Forty years ago, I remember, it took me more than five hours (going in opposite direction) in an air force Dakota.

The only two places left on my itinerary are Jakarta and Bandung. In both places I visit the Dutch military cemeteries that are kept immaculately clean. I find the grave of general Spoor, the popular army commander who was a military genius and a gentleman. But the grave of one of my army buddies isn't there. From a pamphlet I learn that all those who fell in northern Sumatra are now buried in Cimahi and time doesn't permit me to visit it.

Jakarta is a busy and squalid metropolis of seven million. The traffic is chaotic and makes the Toronto rush hour look like a sedate affair. The Honda and Toyota-powered maniacs zig-zag through the countless traffic circles with a skill that would make a bat envious. Their speed reminds one of the Grand Prix race and their courage is like that of a Kamikaze pilot, with results that are often equally tragic — the accident statistics are frightening.

The city is dotted with what I think are ugly monuments, erected by Soekarno* in the Russian heroes-of-socialism style. In his heyday Soekarno was worshipped like a demi-god. But he was a notorious womanizer and his flirtations with the Communists and his grab for absolute power led to his downfall when the military removed him from office in 1965.

The giant obelisk in Jakarta's Merdeka Square is, according to my travel guide, "Soekarno's last erection." One traveller reported that after sunset he got "... lots of interesting offers from the local hookers under the monument," concluding it must be "the symbolism of that huge phallus."

Coming back to 1965 for a moment, it was called "the year of dangerous living," which is the title of an Australian film on those events. The Communists ventured a coup and killed six top generals. But the army swung into action and took terrible revenge. Hundreds of thousands (some say a million) Communists and fellow travellers, including women and children, were brutally murdered and the *Partai Kommunis Indonesia* was outlawed. General Soeharto took over from Soekarno and still rules the nation.

Five principles

To prevent any fanatical group from seizing power and in an effort to cement the nation together, the Soeharto regime proclaimed a new state philosophy called *Pancasila* (Five Principles). They are 1) belief in the one and only God, 2) a just and civilized society, 3) unity of Indonesia, 4) democracy guided by inner wisdom of dialogue, and 5) social justice for all. It sounds to me rather woolly and platitudinous, but it is greatly admired everywhere in the nation, I am told.

Frankly, I think *Pancasila* is a clever move to defeat the Communists (who don't believe in God) and to outwit the fanatical Muslims, such as the erstwhile Darul Islam, who were bent on making the Koran the law of the land. The result is that Indonesia is a land of peace, unlike many of its neighbours — the Philippines with its Marxist terrorists, Sri Lanka with its tribal horrors, or India's Punjab region where Sihks and Hindus are locked in a hopeless, religious war. Not to mention Cambodia, torn apart by civil war. Still, *Pancasila* is more and more becoming a civic religion itself, daily exalted on TV with symbols and martial songs. Those who warn against such exaltation run the risk of public disapproval and ostracism. Without a clear enunciation of the limits of state power and an affirmation of the freedom of non-state structures, *Pancasila* will not guarantee true freedom. At least, I don't think it will.

The road to Bandung via the spectacular Puncak Pass is terribly busy. Until Bogor (the old Buitenzorg), the highway is four-lane, but over the pass it narrows to two and the near-misses make the heart periodically skip a beat. As in days of yore, Bandung is a beautiful town, and a visit to the nearby Tankuban Perahu volcano is a must on anyone's program. At least, that's what it says on a travel brochure, although I find the trip a bit disappointing.

On the way back to Jakarta I make one final visit to the Kota which contains the heart of old Batavia with its railroad station and 19th century warehouses. Nearby is Sunda Kelapa, the old harbour where hundreds of Makassar schooners are loaded by hordes of sweating dockworkers in the burning sun. When I ask a few of them how much they earn with this back-breaking labour they say 3,000 rupiah (about $3) a day. It is obvious that occupational health and safety rules have not yet been invented here, for the men precariously balance their heavy loads on wildly swaying, narrow gangplanks. All for three bucks a day.

My nostalgia trip is quickly coming to an end and, quite frankly, I long for home. The KLM plane leaves on time for the 18-hour flight to Amsterdam.

Selamat tinggal (farewell), Indonesia. It was good to get reacquainted.

*Everywhere in the Indonesian language the Dutch "oe" has been replaced with the letter u. Bandoeng is now Bandung, Taroetoeng is Tarutung, and so on. But I found two remarkable exceptions. The official spelling of the names of the country's only two presidents is Soekarno and Soeharto. I suppose it's because that's how their names were originally spelled during the colonial era.

Ed Vanderkloet is researcher for the Christian Labour Association of Canada. He lives in Rexdale, Ont.

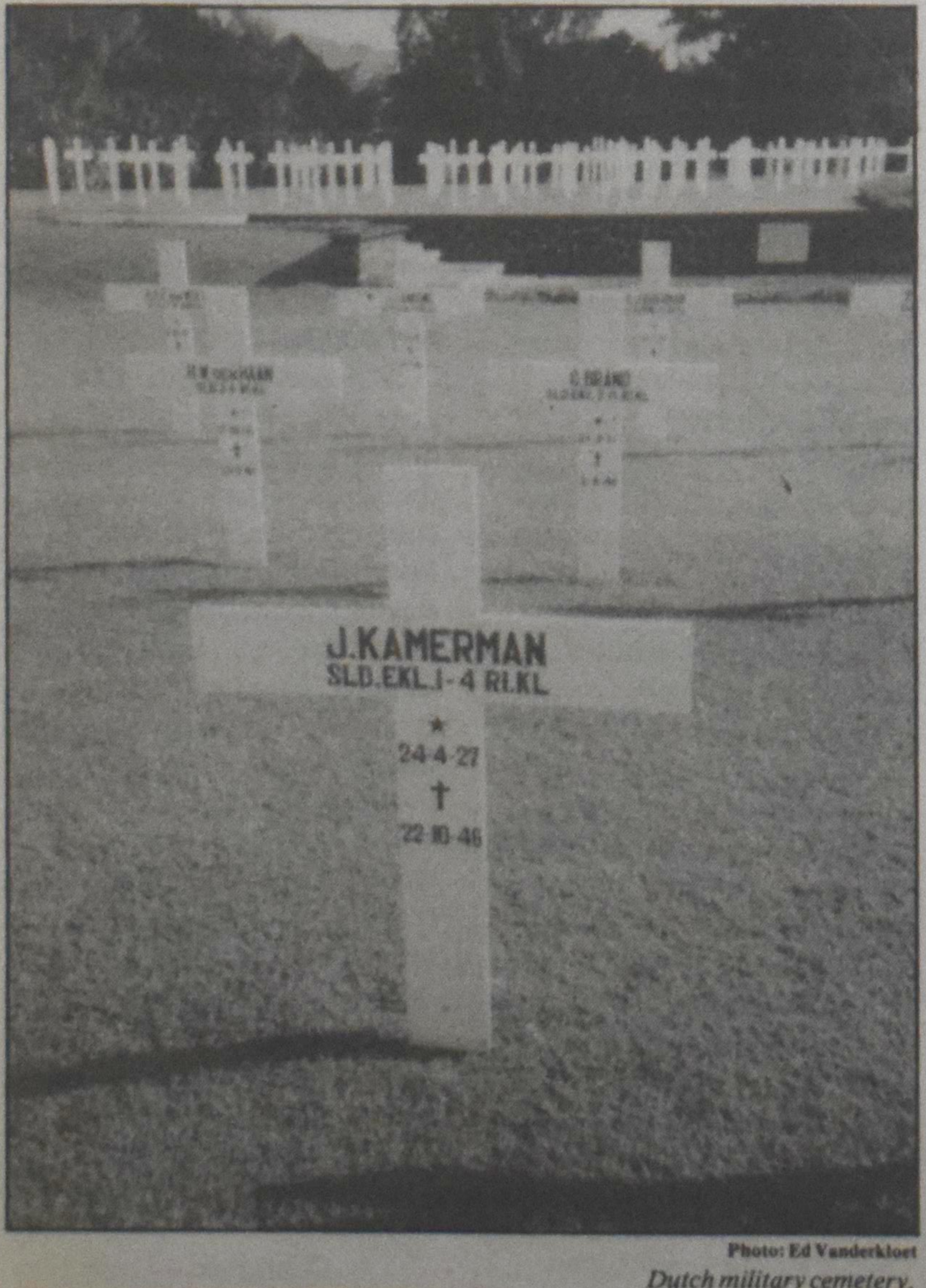

Photo: Ed Vanderkloet
Dutch military cemetery.

Photo: Ed Vanderkloet
"Soekarno's last election." Jakarta.

Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada:

Forging a Canadian way

A Reformed Christian voice to Canadian society

Marian Van Til

The Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada ("Canadian Council" for short), met for a week near the end of November in the Willowdale Christian Reformed Church in a Toronto suburb. The work of this year's council sessions may have far-reaching effects if the denomination's synod accepts the council's proposal of dividing the church into regional synods. (See accompanying story.)

The council is a kind of para-ecclesiastical body which meets every two years to discuss business that is oriented specifically to the Christian Reformed Church in its Canadian context. The council's decisions are not binding on its member classes in the way that CRC synodical decisions are. And though the "regional synods" issue was a major one this year, much of the council's focus since its inception in 1968 has been on church members' relation to social issues rather than in-house church matters.

Thus, over the years, the council's Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) has researched and presented statements on such issues as the lottery, pornography, nuclear arms, abortion, Sunday shopping and other issues.

Diverse agenda

This year's agenda contained reports and sometimes accompanying calls for action from such diverse groups and committees as the National Committee for Ministry Among Indians and Metis, the Consultative Committee on Interchurch Task Forces, the People for Sunday Association, the Interchurch Committee for Refugees, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, representatives of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition and the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America, and study committees regarding Vision Television and proposed regional (Canadian/American) synods for the denomination.

This last issue was perhaps the most directly ecclesiastical, but one which would have far-reaching effects on the future of the CRC. That matter and others are reported upon in stories following.

The atmosphere at November's council session was relaxed, friendly, informal but orderly (in proper CRC fashion, Robert's Rules were never long forgotten). Each member classis — Alberta North and South, B.C. Northeast and Southeast, Chatham, Eastern Canada, Hamilton, Huron, Minnesota North (currently the only international classis), Niagara, Quinte, Toronto — could send three delegates, one pastor, one elder, one deacon, for a total of 36 possible delegates.

Jim Joosse of Eastern Canada (pastor, Kentville, N.S.) was elected president; John Zantingh of Classis Quinte was vice-president (pastor, Maranatha, Bowmanville, Ont.); Classis Huron's Ed Den Haan, complete with computer, was clerk (campus chaplain, University of Guelph.)

Commentary: A Canadian regional synod in the CRC?

Peter Nicolai

When the Council of the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) met in Willowdale, Ont. during the week of November 14, it recommended the initiation of Canadian and American regional synods for the Christian Reformed church. As the report reflected, the CRC has a long history of regarding regional synods very favourably. In 1987 a committee of the CCRCC encouraged the development of regional synods. And now, following the instruction of 1987 Council, and a study committee report to this year's council, a plan for the implementation of such synods has been approved (see story, p. 12). Council has requested the classes of the Canadian CRC to overture Synod 1990 of the CRC to approve the reorganization of the denomination.

The proposed Canadian synod would meet annually to govern Canadian domestic and world ministries. These ministries would have boards that replace, in Canada, the present Home and World Mission Boards. The Canadian synod would also assume the governance of all other ministries of the denomination except Publications, Historical Committee, Sermons for Reading Services, Radio & TV Broadcasting, Calvin College and Seminary and the Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad.

The American congregations would also be organized into a regional synod with its separate boards and administrative offices. The "general synod" would meet every three years to care for creedal, liturgical and church polity matters.

Very drastic and radical changes indeed! I hope both Canadian and American congregations discuss this issue thoroughly. It is an administrative matter. Administrative matters don't always demand our interest and careful attention. However, "administration" is also one of the gifts of God's Holy Spirit to his Church. In this regard, I look forward to the report of the denomination's Structure Review Committee. It would be good for church members to discuss both this report and the question of regional synods at the same time.

I am prepared to be persuaded, but I do not think the implementation of "Canadian" and "American" regional synods is warranted. I offer my reasons for your consideration and reaction.

Regional, but what regions?

The Council of CRCs in Canada need not argue the merits of regional synods. We well know that the church's ministry is local first. "The more actively the congregation pursues its own tasks and the more involved its members are in the communal ministries of the classes or those supervised by synod, the more effectively the body of the Lord functions" (p. 57 of the council's *Agenda)*. Who would want to argue against that? Regional synods make good sense and now may well be the time to implement them.

Does that demand Canadian/American regional synods, however? How would a Canadian regional synod bring the work of the church closer to the congregations of Canada? How would the Halifax and Vancouver churches have a closer and better working relationship in a Canadian synod with headquarters (presumably) in southwestern Ontario? What effect would such a division have on the mission and unity of the Christian Reformed Church?

The two main arguments of the Council's report justifying a Canadian synod are the maturity of the Canadian churches and recent policy changes in Revenue Canada. Let's look at the second reason first.

Revenue Canada now demands that Canadian churches control their own ministries. Does this, however, demand regional synods? Why? The report does not make this clear. Nor, does it take into account the "joint venture agreements" that are being worked out by our denominational agencies. It appears that these arrangements will satisfy the requirements of the Canadian government. If this isn't the case, the Canada Council must still demonstrate why Revenue Canada's new policies require a Canadian regional synod.

The joint venture arrangement avoids the costly duplication of boards and agencies that the institution of national regional synods would require. It is also less bureaucratic than another level of synods.

The argument regarding Canadian maturity is the more important one. Indeed, the Canadian Christian Reformed Church has matured and grown both in number and character since World War II.

We have, thankfully, made our presence in Canada known very significantly. The development of Christian day schools, Citizens for Public Justice, the Christian Labour Association and the Institute for Christian Studies have done much to make the Reformed community known in Canada. A very significant contribution has also been made by the Canada Council's Committee for Contact with the Government. This committee's report and presentations to our authorities have been well-received. They are also very helpful to CRC congregations. A quick review of council's agenda this year and its past deliberations demonstrate how prominent the work and witness of this committee has been.

Would a regional synod enhance this witness and make it more Canadian? How and why? It could be argued that this committee ought to be expanded and given a broader mandate. We don't need a regional synod to do that, however.

Thirty years ago there was a way of thinking that was often characterized as "Canadian" in the Christian Reformed Church. Those who most vocally called for a Reformed Christian presence in labour and politics were frequently assumed to be from Canada. This was not always the case, of course, but social activism seemed to be the trade mark of the Canadian presence in the denomination.

It's not necessarily a matter of maturity, but this characterization is seldom, if ever, made today. What distinguishes and often divides us today in the CRC is not Canadian versus American. Our differences and our similarities trade across the 49th parallel more easily than goods and services. Frankly, I fear we would weaken our unity rather than enhance it by adopting Canadian and American regional synods.

No closer to our hearts

If Canadian boards and a Canadian synod would bring domestic ministries closer to the hearts of the Canadian congregations, the Indian Ministries of Winnipeg and Regina should already be the most cherished ministries of Canada. They have always been under the umbrella of the Canada Council. However, there is no evidence that they are closer to the heart of most local Canadian congregations than other denominational ministries. These important ministries have our support and encouragement and are supported by an extra quota above what the Canadian churches pay to the denomination's Board of Home Missions.

Continued on page 13 ...

One woman in a man's world

Classis Eastern Canada's Wilma Euverman, a deacon from Ottawa, was the sole female delegate to Council. She enjoyed the chance to be there, she says, though she had doubts at first. *"I'm not a crusader. 'Women in office' has never been a big issue for me," explains Euverman. "It's just a natural thing." Her fellow delegates apparently felt her presence was a 'natural thing.' She was accepted as one of them.*

A Canadian regional synod in the CRC?

... continued from page 12.

Yet, most Canadian congregations don't "own" them more significantly than other programs of our church. They are dear to Winnipeg and Regina, but would it be any different if they were under the umbrella of the Board of Home Missions centred in Grand Rapids? I don't think so, and Council's report gives me no reason to change my mind.

Canadian congregations and classes that have Home Missions church planting ministries supervised by the Grand Rapids board cherish these ministries as much as the Indian Ministries are cherished by their local communities. That's as it should be. Establishing new "head offices" in Canada will not improve things.

The principle that the ministries of the church must be close to and "owned" by the local congregations is sound. The strategy of implementing Canadian/American regional synods to maintain the principle is not sound.

Need cross-border unity

I'm sure that one day we will have regional synods in the Christian Reformed Church. I also hope that the dividing line will not be the Canadian American border. I say this as a Canadian whose heart beats with a rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner." It's just that I think that the CRC of Fredericton, New Brunswick, would be served better with increased contact with the congregation of Vergennes, Vermont, than it would be with a new and additional alliance with Neerlandia, Alberta. Lynden, Washington, would be blessed more with better contact with Vancouver, B.C., than a new and additional alliance with Miami, Florida.

In conclusion, the Canada Council has spoken of regional synods but actually recommends that the CRC be divided into two national synods. I do not think this is either wise or appropriate.

The report does not demonstrate that such a division would strengthen the involvement of local congregations or the national witness of the denomination. Rather than accomplishing its goals, I'm convinced, the regional synods would weaken our unity and add another level of bureaucracy to the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Council urges adopting Canadian/American regional synods

MVT, with RVV

WILLOWDALE, Ont. — The Council of CRCs in Canada (CCRCC) has endorsed the principle of regional synods for the Christian Reformed denomination and has asked its member classes to overture the church's general synod this year "to appoint a committee to implement Regional Synod [sic] in the near future."

The Council hopes synod will give "serious consideration" to the model for regional synods proposed by the Council's study committee. That model proposes that the CRC in North America be divided into two regional synods, one encompassing Canada, the other, the U.S. The regional synods would each meet annually to deal with ministry and administrative matters, "focusing attention on the church's mission within the American and Canadian contexts."

A general synod would meet triennially to deal with creedal, doctrinal and liturgical matters and "to adjudicate overtures, protests and appeals relating to confessional, ethical or church political matters."

Matured Canadians?

Regional synods, Council said, "reflect the Reformed understanding of the nature of the church and Reformed church polity" and would also "enable the churches [i.e., congregations] to minister more effectively in their respective regions." Forming regional synods along national lines would "enable Canadian churches to participate in governance in matters unique to Canadian churches." The growth of the CRC as a whole and "the level of maturity attained by the Canadian Christian Reformed churches and their ministries" make regional synods "feasible and desirable," Council concluded.

Discussion on the Council floor indicated that most delegates favoured the *principle* of regional synods. But there were differences on how to move and how strongly to push the idea.

It was observed that though not all congregations and classes in Canada support a Canadian regional synod, a mixed Canadian voice at Synod 1990 would make it tough for such a proposal to pass.

Photo: Bert Witvoet

The executive of Council: (from l-r) The Revs. John Zantingh, Jim Joosse and Ed Den Haan.

Impact of television realized

MVT

The debate was long and anguished. Should an "extra" $120,000 per year for the next couple of years be allotted to produce new programming for the CRC's time slots on Vision TV?

Council's pre-advisory committee recommended that VTV air time purchased remain constant for the next two years.

But others felt strongly that long range plans must be made now if work is to continue in this important, pervasive medium: merely using U.S.-produced and -oriented Back-to-God Hour/Faith 20 programming is not being an adequate biblical witness to Canada.

In the end, the money was allotted by the necessary two-thirds majority vote.

An electronic media committee (EMC) consisting of Reformed Christian television/media professionals will be set up under Council's aegis to "work on producing and promoting programs shown on VTV." At a second stage, the EMC would develop a separate production agency which would be known as Reformed TV and which would eventually have four branches: programming, promotion, management and development/research.

The Back to God Hour would continue to produce the basic evangelistic message of the Faith-20 programs, and the EMC would place them into a Canadian format.

Education

London, Ont., high school celebrates 25 years of Christian education

Jacoba Bos

LONDON, Ont. — They came by train and plane, in city buses and in family station wagons complete with baby seats and colouring books. They came to sing and play, hug and kiss, to reminisce and rekindle friendships.

The occasion was the 25th anniversary of the London District Christian Secondary School (LDCSS). The two-day celebration drew former students and staff from as far away as Baffin Island and B.C.

It all started in 1961 when the LDCSS Society was established. The minutes (written in Dutch) note that the chairperson, Rev. Arie Van Eek, compared the challenge for Christian secondary education to the seemingly insurmountable task Gideon faced when he battled the Midean army.

The 27 pioneer students in 1965 received their first education in the living room of a small house purchased by the society. The house's garage served as an additional classroom and wooden crates served as lockers.

The board, short on financial means but full of optimism and faith, set the tuition fee at $75 annually per family. The total budget for that first year was $22,000.

Months of preparation paid off for the anniversary committee when it welcomed alumni to a nostalgia evening in which wit and skits, guitar-accompanied singing and roll call intermingle with personal greetings and joyous reunions. The newly renovated gym could hardly contain the exuberance of the large crowd.

"Time Line," an exposition of world and school events over the last 25 years, was a popular attraction for many who attended open house. Through "Time Line" they were reminded of the Trudeau years and the Watergate affair; the growing enrolment at the school; the rise in popularity of choral singing and the performing arts; the installing and phasing out of Grade 13 and the attempts at setting a dress code for students when skirts were short and hair was long.

And they marvelled at the way God uses teachers to equip students to serve in this world as his image-bearers. As one supporter put it, "The real strength of LDCSS lies in the staff, who are committed, dedicated and are a caring group of wonderful teachers."

"Lord, in your light we see light" is engraved on the cornerstone which was unveiled during open house. It is the school's motto. At times the vision for this truth has been obscured and at other times it has shone as brightly as the 25 candles which illuminated the semi-darkness of the nearly filled Centennial Hall as the celebration concluded.

One former student summed up the celebration saying, "The excitement, warmth and love we experienced this weekend have given us memories we'll cherish for years to come."

Photo: Josten's Photography

Alumni of London (Ont.) District Christian Secondary School gather to celebrate the school's 25th anniversary.

Modern society is weightless, says educator

Nancy Olthuis

EDMONTON — How can The King's College make a difference in the modern world as an institution offering Christian university education?

This was one question that Dr. Sidney DeWaal, first president of The King's College, addressed as keynote speaker at the college's 10th anniversary program recently.

A capacity crowd of administration, faculty, students and supporters filled St. James United Church to participate in the evening celebration and to hear "A Christian Look Back into the Future."

In a moving address punctuated by expressive physical gestures, DeWaal, now dean of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Mass., concluded that "modernity is the greatest single opportunity and the greatest single threat that is faced by the Christian church and community."

As an example, he said that students can experience the wonders of modern technology by gaining access to more and more information through the use of computers. Technology can be a threat, however, when it tempts students to think it can work better than God.

Modern society is characterized by a state of "normlessness." Ours is a society without behaviour patterns to which to conform or rules by which to live, said DeWaal. Modernity has made modern society "weightless."

Shift the centre of gravity

Traditional institutions, including those providing Christian higher education, have been displaced from the centre of modern society and relegated to the margins. The mandate of The King's College is to replace the centre of gravity with the glory of Jesus Christ who gives weight and meaning to modern society.

"There is increasing evidence that it will be the laity, not the professional clergy, who will lay this weight of glory on the world. Christian higher education will become increasingly important [because it will] train weighty leadership that will fill an empty world."

DeWaal challenged the men and women of The King's College to demonstrate leadership by bringing the uniqueness of Christ to the world of modernity in Edmonton and beyond.

He said that this is how Christians can "look back into the future."

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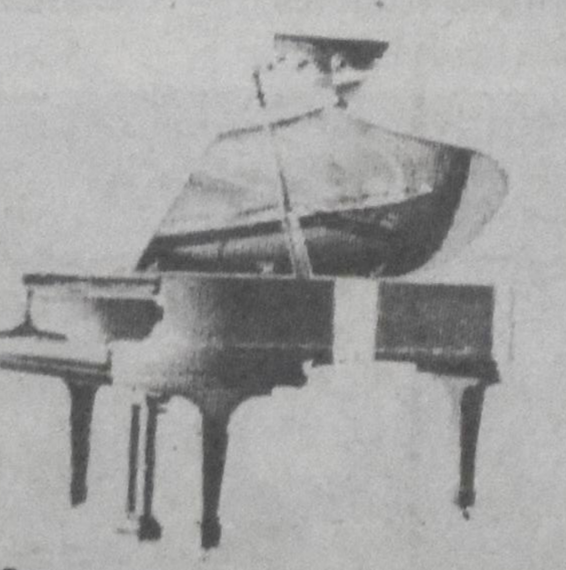

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Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P and M:

My friend and neighbour has become involved in our church's Coffee Break [Bible study] program [for women] over the past two years. As a result she has been worshipping with us as a guest on a fairly regular basis. She has been warmly welcomed by our congregation but on some level does not feel totally accepted.

I have become very sensitive to in-house jokes, comments made in Dutch, and references to non-Dutch, non-Reformed people as "Canadians" and "outsiders."

Just think how she must feel. As long as we are so insensitive to guests from the community, how can we ever hope to reach out to our neighbours as Christians?

Dear Canadian, Eh!:

We're sure the people in your church are not deliberately inhospitable. They're simply unaware and need to become more sensitive to the feelings of those who are new as well as those church members who enjoy a different cultural identity or church background.

How then can you educate your congregation?

First, you have to speak up. When you hear Dutch spoken in the kitchen and the hallways of your church, gently remind people that they are leaving someone out of their conversation. Be a role model in avoiding any terms of reference or in-house topics that might exclude someone else.

Secondly, share your concerns with the leadership in your church. Your church council and your pastor are in key positions to chip away at this problem.

It seems, then, that the Coffee Break and evangelism committees have an educational task as part of their mandate. Don't just get upset. Plan a strategy together that will address this issue regularly. For example, request some time at an upcoming congregational meeting and use it to make the congregation aware of your joys and frustrations as persons actively trying to assimilate newcomers into the church. Also, don't hesitate to ask your pastor to touch on this in his preaching from time to time.

Don't expect change overnight. People have to be reminded over and over again to watch what they say and how they say it.

We are not anti-Dutch. Individuals and families are free, even encouraged, to celebrate their cultural and national heritage. Canada is a marvelous mosaic of colourful immigrants from all parts of the world; cultural diversity is a positive characteristic of our nation.

A church, however, finds its identity in Christ, not its ethnic roots.

We are Christians; many of us are Canadians; some of us also happen to be Dutch. As long as we identify ourselves in that order we'll steer clear of the subtle message that "if you're not Dutch, you're not much!"

Essentially we need to come to grips with what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (I Cor. 9:22).

Those involved in Coffee Break are on the cutting edge of the church. Sometimes, therefore, you may feel wounded, while at other times you may find yourself drawing a little blood as you challenge the rest of the family of God. It comes with the territory.

Meanwhile, we are very much encouraged by your mention of the warm welcome your friend received. Your congregation's heart is in the right place. They just need to fine tune their gift of hospitality with a little help from sensitive people like you.

P.S. Woe to any church council which condescendingly refers to Coffee Break as a "Koffee Kletsch."

Dear P and M:

Some churches, when they celebrate communion, expect visitors to request permission or sign a register; others announce from the pulpit that all those who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are welcome to participate. What is better, a closed or an open table, a supervised or an unsupervised table?

Dear Communicant:

Actually, the Lord's Supper is always open and is always supervised.

It is open to all "who are displeased with themselves because of their sins, but who nevertheless trust that their sins are pardoned and that their continuing weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and to lead a better life" (*Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. 81)

As to supervision, each church council may take a slightly different approach. In our denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, the Church Order respects this. It wisely states: "The consistory shall provide for such administrations as it shall judge most conducive to edification" (C.O. 60b). In 1975, the CRC synod clarified this rather wordy guideline: "The choice of method and administration is determined by the consistory since the Church Order does not speak directly to this issue."

We'd like to make an observation: whenever we create a set of rules, legalism is just around the corner. Two opposing stories based on actual events come to mind.

A young woman reared in a particular congregation, known and loved by all, did profession of faith, married and moved away. Whenever she returned home to visit her family she would worship in the church of her youth. On a given Sunday she got to the church in the nick of time, settled her little ones in the nursery, found a seat and discovered that communion was to be celebrated that morning. She was not alarmed. After all, she was in her home church. But when the elements were distributed and she reached for the bread, a disapproving gesture by the serving elder warned her to pass. Why? She had not requested permission to participate as a guest. She had not signed in!

Another true story. A recent refugee, sponsored by the church in question, attended worship regularly for a number of weeks. One Sunday Lord's Supper was celebrated and when the bread was passed and the wine was distributed he ate and drank too. He happily said Yes when he heard this invitation: "All who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and who desire to live in obedience to him are now invited to come with gladness to the table of the Lord." In this instance the spirit of hospitality ruled and he was served.

These stories illustrate two extremes. The practice of most churches falls somewhere in between. As a general guideline, when we visit other congregations we need to honour the "house rules" of each church family, rather than debate whose way is better.

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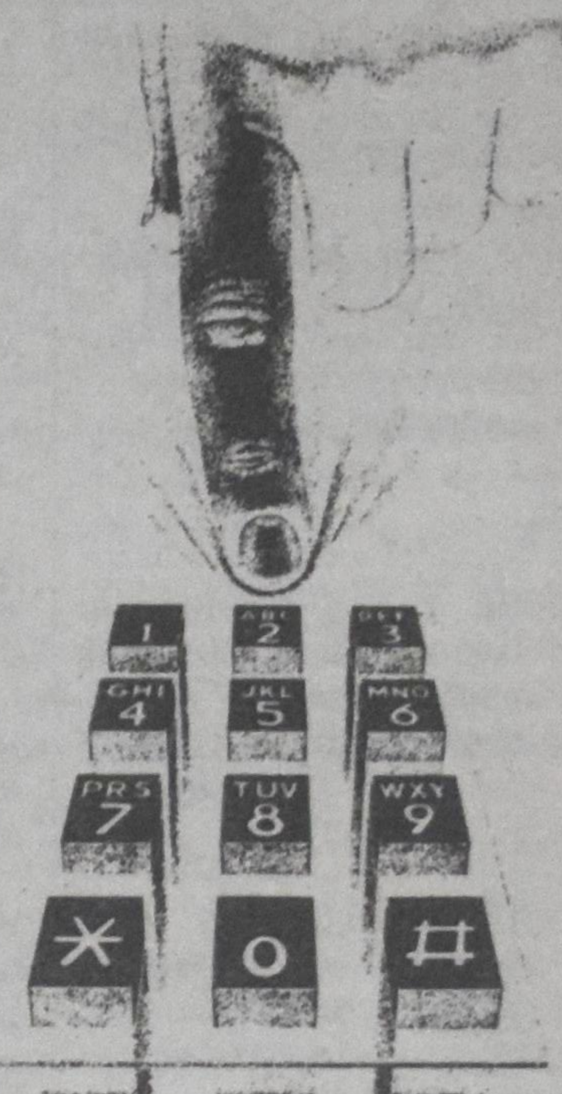

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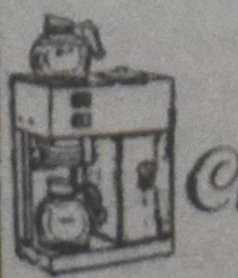

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4-261 Martindale Rd.,
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.
Phone: (416) 682-8311
FAX: (416) 682-8313

Birthday

SCHEFFEL:
Congratulations and best wishes to our mom, grandma and great-grandma

Mrs. ALICE SCHEFFEL

as she celebrates her 80th birthday on Dec. 8, 1989. May the Lord continue to bless you.
With love from your children, grandchildren and great-grand-children.
Home address: 27 Lynwood Ave., Apt. 506, Brantford, ON N3S 6S4.

Births

BROUWER (nee Vandendool):
"We give thanks to thee, O God; We call on thy name and recount thy wondrous deeds." (Ps. 75:1)
It is with praise and thankfulness to the Lord, the giver of life, who has made all things well, that we, Sid and Carol-Ann, announce the birth of our second child:

JORDAN THOMAS

born on Nov. 17, 1989, weighing 7 lbs. 7 oz. A brother for Matthew. Eleventh grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Marinus Vandendool of Caledonia, Ont., and 12th grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Peter Brouwer of Hamilton, Ont.
Home address: 7177 Whitechurch Rd. E., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0.

KOOPMAN:
Rob and Jane thank the Lord for the safe arrival of their son

PAUL WILLIAM

He was born on Nov. 13, 1989, weighing 8 lbs. A little brother for Nicholas. Thirteenth grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. W. Koopman of Ingersoll, Ont., fourth grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. A. Venema of Crafton, Ont.
Home address: 5 Park Ave., Brantford, ON N3S 5G9.

POTT:
"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15)
Eric and Theresa (nee DeBoer) thank God for his precious gift, a healthy son

GRANT MATTHEW

born Nov. 10, 1989, weighing 8 lbs. 7 oz. A little brother for Marguerite. Grant is the third grandchild for Norman and Emmy DeBoer of Stevensville, Ont., and sixth grandchild for Andrew and Nancy Pott of Orangeville, Ont.
Home address: General Delivery, Laurel, ON L0N 1L0.

Marriage

FLANTUA-LENTERS:
Thankful to the Lord, who has brought them together, we announce the wedding of our parents

Mrs. WILHELMINA F. FLANTUA-KEY
and
Mr. HERMAN LENTERS

The ceremony will take place on Dec. 16, 1989, at 3 p.m. in Burlington Chr. Ref. Church, New Street, Burlington, Ont.
Future address: Regency Crt. Apts. 690 Regency Cres., Apt. 414, Burlington, ON L7N 3H1.

Births

SMIT:
With much praise and thankfulness to God, we, Lucian and Christine (VanderMeulen), are proud to announce the healthy and safe arrival of our fourth child, a son

CHAD JACOB

born Nov. 12, 1989. A new brother for Natalie, Ryan and Robyn. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. J. VanderMeulen of Belleville, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. J. Smit of Jarvis, Ont. Great-grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. J. Colyn of St. Catharines, Ont., and Mrs. E. Roorda of Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont. Also welcomed by his aunts, uncles and cousins.
Home address: R.R.#1, Wainfleet, ON L0S 1V0.

Anniversaries

Drayton St. Catharines
1964 December 23 1989
With praise and gratitude to our covenant God, we announce with joy the 25th wedding anniversary of our dear parents

Rev. HENRY and JEAN KATERBERG
(nee Visscher)

God has richly blessed them and provided for them as they in all their ways acknowledged the Lord, trusting the Lord with all their hearts, never leaning on their own understanding (Prov. 3:5, 6)
With love and congratulations from your children:
William Katerberg — Notre Dame University, South Bend, Ind.
Don & Janine Koopman — St. Catharines, Ont.
Irene Katerberg — Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont.
Open house will be held on Saturday, Dec. 23, 1989, from 2-5 p.m. in Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, 301 Scott St., St. Catharines, Ont.
Home address: 104 Sherman Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2N 2L5.

On Dec. 22, 1989, we celebrate with joy and thanksgiving the 40th anniversary of our parents

CASEY and FEMMY VAN AMERSFOORT
(nee Thalen)

Congratulations Mom and Dad.
Love from:
Helen Boven
Michael, Laurie, Casey, Kelly
Herb & Joanne Van Amersfoort
April, Jeremy, Steven, Kerissa
Hillie Blok
Gregory, Pauline
Stephanie & Frank Zoer
Telly, Krystle
An open house will be held on Saturday, Dec. 9, 1989, from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. in the Auburn Community Hall, Mill Rd., Auburn, Ont.
Home address: Box 77, Blyth, ON N0M 1H0.

Obituaries

On Nov. 11, 1989, the Lord in his infinite wisdom suddenly called home and promoted to glory our dear friend

BERT LOOYENGA

May the Lord sustain his wife Ann and the children.
May it comfort them to know that thoughts of friends who care are with them at this time in sympathy and prayer.
Harry & Joyce Rinsma
George & Corrie Vos
Rick & Hilda Timmerman
Dick & Renee Voskamp
Bert & Linda Vanderlaan
Dick & Agnes Wyga
Bill & Grace Lamberink
Ed & Wilma Boorsma
John & Martha Oosterhof
Henry & Ann Venema

Obituaries

"My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me." (Ps. 63:8)
On Oct. 6, 1989, the Lord called home

JAN (John) BOUWMAN

suddenly at the age of 55.
Beloved husband of Anne Glabais.
Cherished father of:
Darlene & Arthur VanRavens — Georgetown, Ont.
Robert Bouwman — Orillia, Ont.
Grandfather of Jeffery, Katilin and Craig
Dear son of Geesje Bouwman and the late Hendrik Bouwman of Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.
Brother of:
Peter & Bonnie — Vancouver
Anneke Poot — Mississauga
the late Johan Bouwman — Georgetown
Lovingly remembered by his nieces and nephews.
Funeral Services were held at Georgetown Chr. Ref. Church on Oct. 10, 1989.
Correspondence address: 72 Wildwood Rd., Georgetown, ON L7G 4S8.

On Nov. 26, 1989, God in his loving wisdom took to himself his child, our sister and aunt

ETJE NAGEL

at the age of 82. She, like Job, knew that her Redeemer lives.
Hendrick Nagel and fam. — Uirum (Gr.), the Neth.
Jantje Nagel — Willowdale, Ont.
the fam. of Leendert Nagel — the Neth.
Tryntje Nagel — Willowdale, Ont.
Willy & Dick Hogerwerf — Beamsville, Ont.
Bill & Corrie Nagel and fam. — Willowdale, Ont.
Job 1:21b
Correspondence address: 4397 Lincoln Ave., R.R. #3, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B3.

In loving memory of

DIRKJE SUZANNA (Sepers) VERBAAS

of Bellevue, Alta., beloved wife of the late Johannes Verbaas and loving mother of:
Jake Verbaas — Bellevue
Jim & Linda Verbaas — Bellevue
Conrad & Leslie Verbaas — Frank
Henry Verbaas — Blairmore
Suzanna Comeau — Bellevue
Betsy & Arie VanderLinden — Bellevue
18 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren.
Also survived by one brother Nico (Gre) Sepers, the Neth., and four sisters, Heiltje (Henk) Jansen, Ploon Immerzeel, Griet (Pite) Linting, Grada Sepers, all of the Netherlands. Also missed by several nieces and nephews.
Passed away at CNP Health Care Centre on June 15, 1989, at the age of 77. Born in Oude Wettering, the Netherlands, on June 7, 1912.
Funeral services were held at Fantin's Funeral Chapel, Blairmore, Alta., on Monday, June 19, 1989, at 2 p.m. Pastor Jake Weeda, of the Dutch Reformed Church, Granum, Alta., officiated.

Help Wanted

Established Red Deer-area distributor of Nalley's Potato Chips, Johnson Nuts and confectionery is looking for a **Driver/Sales person.** If suited, this position could also be an investment opportunity.
Please reply to: Kits Distributors Ltd., 6850-52 Ave., Red Deer, AB T4N 5H2. Bus.: (403) 347-7432; Fax: (403) 347-7449; Home: (403) 782-4347.

Married couple to work on Central Alberta dairy farm. Housing available. Please call (403) 784-3801.

Help Wanted

Full-time **housekeeper and nanny** wanted. There are four children in the family, ages 2-10 years. Please send references to: P.O. Box 69, Foxboro, ON K0K 2B0.

We need one full-time person (40 hrs.). Hours include one evening (Fri.), and every other Saturday. Work includes: serving customers, some typing, and all other aspects of Christian book selling. Requirements include a pleasing personality, willingness to work hard, eagerness to learn and a love for good books. Apply to store manager Mrs. Ina Klaassens or to owner Gerry Denbok: (416) 637-9151 (store), (416) 639-1075 (home).
The Family Christian Bookstore
750 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON
L7R 3N5

Require qualified **herdsperson** for responsible revisory cattle care and milking. Will train. Three-bedroom house available. Starting salary $25,000 per year. Please supply resume to: Zandbergen Farms Ltd., R.R. #2, Brinston, ON K0E 1C0.

CARING FOR KIDS Mutual Support Systems, a residential program for children, is looking for families in the Niagara Peninsula that would provide foster care for a child in their own home. Please reply to:
Mutual Support Systems
R.R.#1, Perry Rd.,
Wellandport, ON
L0R 2J0
(416) 899-2311

Teachers

AGASSIZ, B.C.: Agassiz Christian School requires a **primary** teacher effective April 1, 1990, with a possible view for employment for the 1990/91 school year. Interested applicants please send resume and/or inquiries to: Mr. Rick Esselink, Principal, Agassiz Christian School, Box 323, Agassiz, BC V0M 1A0 Tel. (604) 796-9310 (school), (604) 796-3209 (home).

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Christian High School requires committed Christians for high school **core** areas in 1990/91. Experienced individuals with energy and willingness to grow professionally with a new school and also work in extracurricular areas are encouraged to apply. Contact Mr. J. VandenPol, Central Alberta Chr. High School, Lacombe, AB P0C 1S0, or phone (403) 782-4535.

Christian Education
in
Canada's Capital

OTTAWA, Ont.: If you are a specialist in **Remedial Education** or **Kindergarten,** are looking for new challenges and rewards, consider: **OTTAWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL.** An opening is available March or September 1990. Please inform us about your abilities, ask about our needs. Write: Wm. Van Dyke, Principal, Ottawa Christian School, 2191 Benjamin Ave., Ottawa, ON K2A 1P6. Phone (613) 722-5836.

TORONTO, Ont.: Toronto Central Christian School will have an opening in the **Primary grades** commencing January 1990. Please address your inquiries or resume to Jack Couperus, Principal, T.C.C.S., 55 Salisbury Ave., Toronto, ON M4X 1C5, or phone (416) 968-2036.

Classified

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Fax: 011-31-02159-12537

Personal

Dutch-Canadian widower, early 70s, from London, Ont., area, would like to meet Dutch-Canadian lady or widow (60-70 yrs.) for companionship, friendship and perhaps marriage. Reply to File #2532, c/o Calvinist Contact, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

Real Estate

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Moving to or from Thunder Bay?
Call Don Ten Have
(807) 577-4810
Representing
Midwest Realty Limited
(807) 623-7404

Miscellaneous

Would like to buy **return flight tickets**, dated between Jan. 11-14, 1990, from Sarasota, Florida, to Toronto, Ont., for two people. Call: Bill Gerrits, Clinton, Ont. (519) 482-7564.

Help Wanted

THE KING'S COLLEGE
A Christian Liberal Arts College

1990-91 Faculty Vacancies

The King's College, a Christian liberal arts college offering B.A., and B.Sc. degrees, has a tenure-track vacancy in sociology. This position will include teaching introductory courses and a two-year cycle of senior-level undergraduate courses. Preferred specializations are any combination of family, gender relations, health and illness, and social psychology. Ph.D. is required along with assent to College's Statement of Faith. Teaching load is moderate and research is required. Position effective July 1, 1990.

The College also has a full-time sessional position open in organic or organometallic chemistry. This position will include teaching organic chemistry as well as some introductory chemistry and preferrably inorganic chemistry. Masters degree is required with graduate level course work in the area of teaching assignment; Ph.D. is preferred. Assent to College's Statement of Faith is also required. Position effective September 1, 1990.

Interested parties should send application letter, curriculum vitae, copies of transcripts, and three letters of reference to:

Dr. S. Keith Ward
Vice President (Academic), Dept. 601
10766-97th Street, Edmonton, AB T5H 2M1
(403) 428-0727

The King's College is an equal opportunity employer, but in accordance with Canadian Employment and Immigration regulations, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Calvin College

invites applications for the position of:

Dean for the Social Sciences and for Language, Literature and Arts

Responsibilities include administrative leadership in curriculum and faculty development as well as supervision of certain all-college programs. Some teaching is normally required. Three year term, renewable, beginning **August 1, 1990.** Send applications including c.v. and references to:

Search Committee
c/o Prof. David Diephouse
Department of History
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 957-6395
Deadline: January 15, 1990

Beginnings Counselling & Adoption Services of Ontario, Inc.

Social Worker — Pregnancy Counselling

Beginnings Counselling & Adoption Services is seeking a Social Worker for pregnancy counselling to women and men and to promote the services of a Christian Adoption Agency and provide education regarding parenting and adoption alternatives.

The successful applicant will have a B.S.W., M.S.W. or equivalent with relevant experience and must be able to perform public relations functions. Valid driver's licence and the use of a vehicle is required. Salary commensurate with experience. Full-time or part-time applicants may be considered.

Please apply to:

Herman Faber
Beginnings Counselling & Adoption Services of Ontario, Inc.
1 Young Street, Suite 308
Hamilton, ON
L8N 1T8

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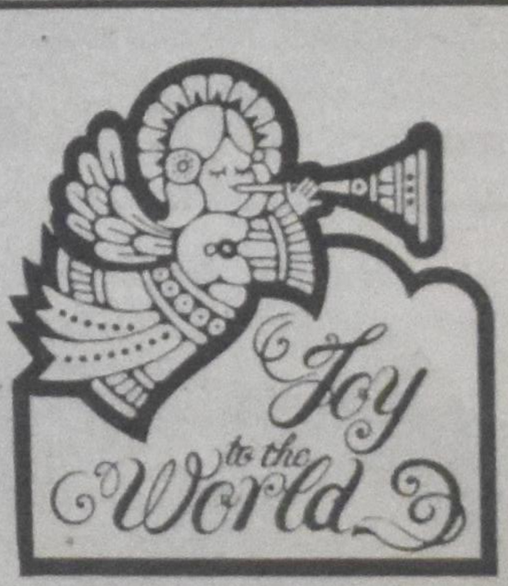

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Kitchener	Linda Boven	(519) 570-0014
Lansing, Mich.	Helen Suk-Louws	(517) 485-6030
London	Harold VanderLei	(519) 438-0175
Mississauga	Donna Geerlinks	(416) 826-4973
Oshawa	Annette Hoogendoorn	(416) 579-6902
Ottawa	Jane VandenBerg	(613) 829-0380
Pickering	New Life Church	(416) 286-2175
St. Catharines	Jenny Suk	(416) 935-9349
St. Thomas	Mary Louws	(519) 631-0918
Toronto	Dave VanDyke	(416) 469-9559
Willowdale	Marlene Suk	(416) 224-0183
Victoria, B.C.	Evelyn Leech	(604) 479-7602

OR for cassette mail orders send $11.95 (plus P&H $1.50) to:

Triangle Records, P.O. Box 1113, St. Catharines, ON L2R 7A3

Teachers

Teaching Principal

The **Trenton Christian School** has an opening for a **Teaching Principal** commencing with the 1990/91 school year. Please send letter of application and resume to:

Principal
Trenton Christian School
20 Fourth Ave., Trenton, ON K8V 5N3
Phone (613) 392-3600
Applications will be accepted until Dec. 30, 1989

Excellent business opportunity

Established Burlington-based landscaping corporation with a steady base of clientele, looking for person or persons interested in purchasing entire company and assets.

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Henry Nieuwenhuis
1171 Stanley Dr., Burlington, ON L7P 2K6
Tel. (416) 336-3655

1990 Commonwealth Games to promote Child Survival Program

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. (WVC) — For the first time in Commonwealth Games history, the New Zealand Games have adopted an official cause — the Child Survival Program — as an integral part of the festivities in Auckland, January 24 - February 3, 1990. The New Zealand Commonwealth Games committee has chosen World Vision to champion this UNICEF-backed healthcare program, which World Vision operates in 17 Commonwealth countries.

World Vision, a Christian relief agency active in 70 countries, will promote support for the Child Survival Program by taking a major role in the cultural component of the games. Six Victoria B.C. students will join 124 other teenagers from across the Commonwealth to form the "World Vision Commonwealth Youth." This high-spirited group will perform in the closing ceremonies, before the Queen, thousands of Games spectators and about 500 million world television viewers. Following the closing ceremonies, the "Commonwealth Youth" will embark on a two-week concert tour of New Zealand.

Their message: While the Child Survival Program has succeeded in immunizing over a million Third World children, much vital work remains. The rich members of the Commonwealth can provide life-giving aid to the poorer nations by supporting the program. World Vision aims to attract enough donations to save millions of children by the time the Commonwealth Games take place in Victoria four years hence.

Every four seconds, a Commonwealth child is felled by a death which the Child Survival Program could have prevented. It immunizes children against the six main killer diseases: diphtheria, measles, polio, tetanus, tuberculosis and whooping cough. But that's not all. The Program also provides crucial health education and nutritional aid, such as oral rehydration against diarrhea. What's more, World Vision drills wells and provides other clean water sources.

The Child Survival Program is spearheaded by the United Nations (UNICEF). World Vision and other non-governmental relief organizations are working dilligently to carry out the program throughout the world.

"Advent Wijdingsdienst"

An evening of Dutch advent and Christmas music for the elderly in the Niagara Peninsula. Scripture readings, choir, brass ensemble, organ and communal singing. Musical direction: Gerzinus Hoekstra. **At 8 p.m., Covenant CRC, 278 Parnell Rd., St. Catharines, Ont.**

Calendar of Events

Dec. 9 Christmas concert by three London choirs plus Andre Knevel at the organ. At 7:30 p.m., Dundas St. Centre United Church, **London**, Ont.

Dec. 10 "Kerstzangdienst" at 7:30 p.m., Emmanuel Ref. Church, 170 Clarke St., Woodstock, Ont.

Dec. 10 "Advent Wijdingsdienst," an evening of Dutch advent and Christmas music, with scripture readings, choir, brass ensemble, organ and communal singing. Musical direction Gerzinus Hoekstra. At 8 p.m., Covenant CRC, St. **Catharines**, Ont.

Dec. 10 Handel's "Messiah," performed by "Laudate Dominum Choir" (dir. Barbara Mavin) and organist Dick DeJonge. At 8 p.m., First Presb. Church, **Chatham**, Ont. Free will offering.

Dec. 11 Public debate between Andrew Kuyvenhoven and Robert Godfrey on the topic: "The state of health of the CRC" at 8 p.m., Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. Sponsored by CCM of the CRC. For info. call Mark Zylstra at (416) 562-5196.

Dec. 15 Christmas celebration sponsored by self-help group for surviving spouses, at 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont.

Dec. 16 Christmas concert by Leendert Kooy's O.C.M.A. with organist Andre Knevel. At 8 p.m., Willowdale United Church, **Willowdale**, Ont. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.

Dec. 17 Annual Christmas concert by St. Thomas & District Male Choir and St. Thomas Ladies' Choir at 8 p.m., First United Church, **St. Thomas**, Ont.

Dec. 17 Christmas concert by the Brampton Chr. Choral Society "Praise the Lord (dir. Wm. Hoekstra) and organist Wim van Suydam. At 8 p.m., Second CRC, **Brampton**, Ont.

Dec. 20 Christmas concert by Leendert Kooy's O.C.M.A. with organist Andre Knevel. At 8 p.m., Rehoboth CRC, **Bowmanville**, Ont. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.

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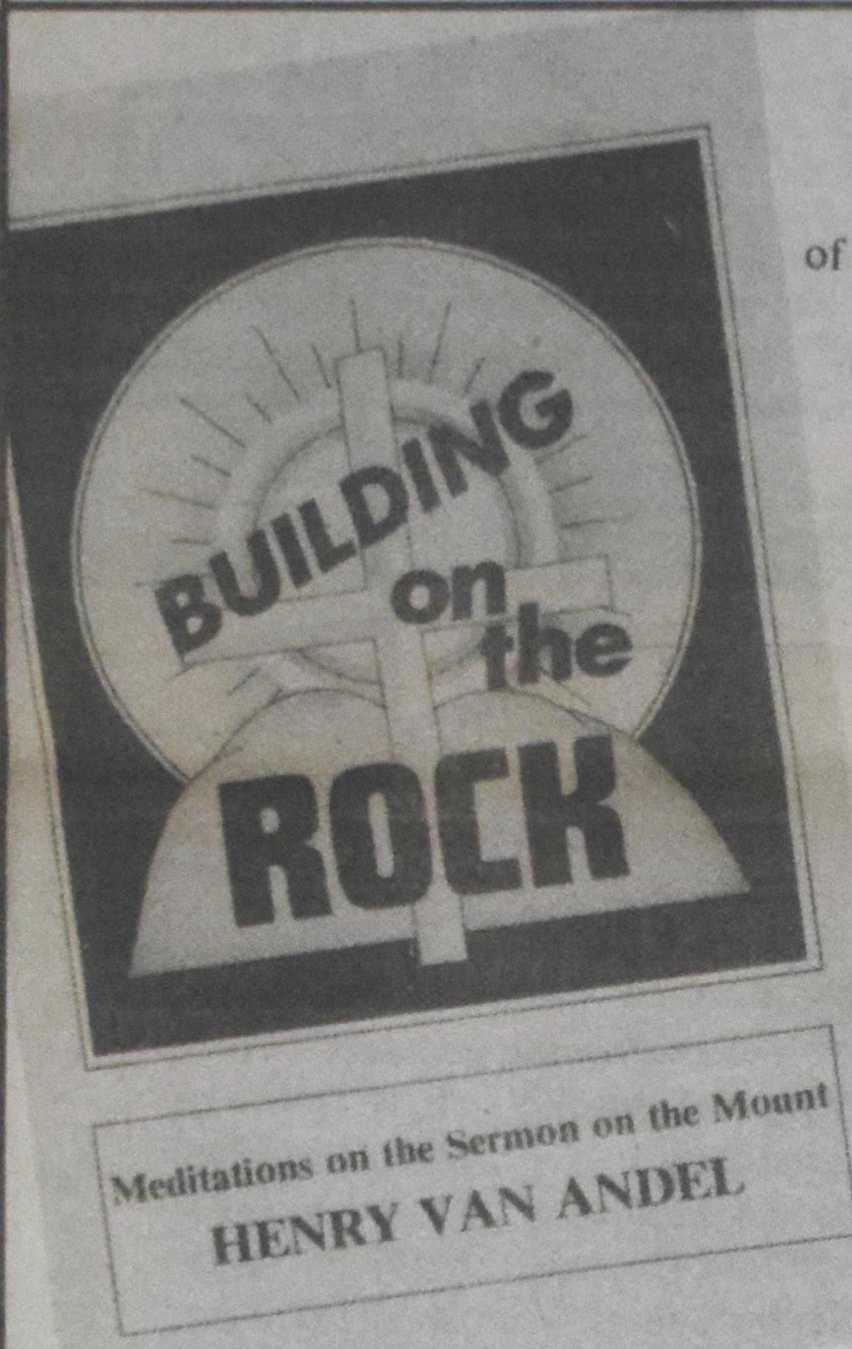

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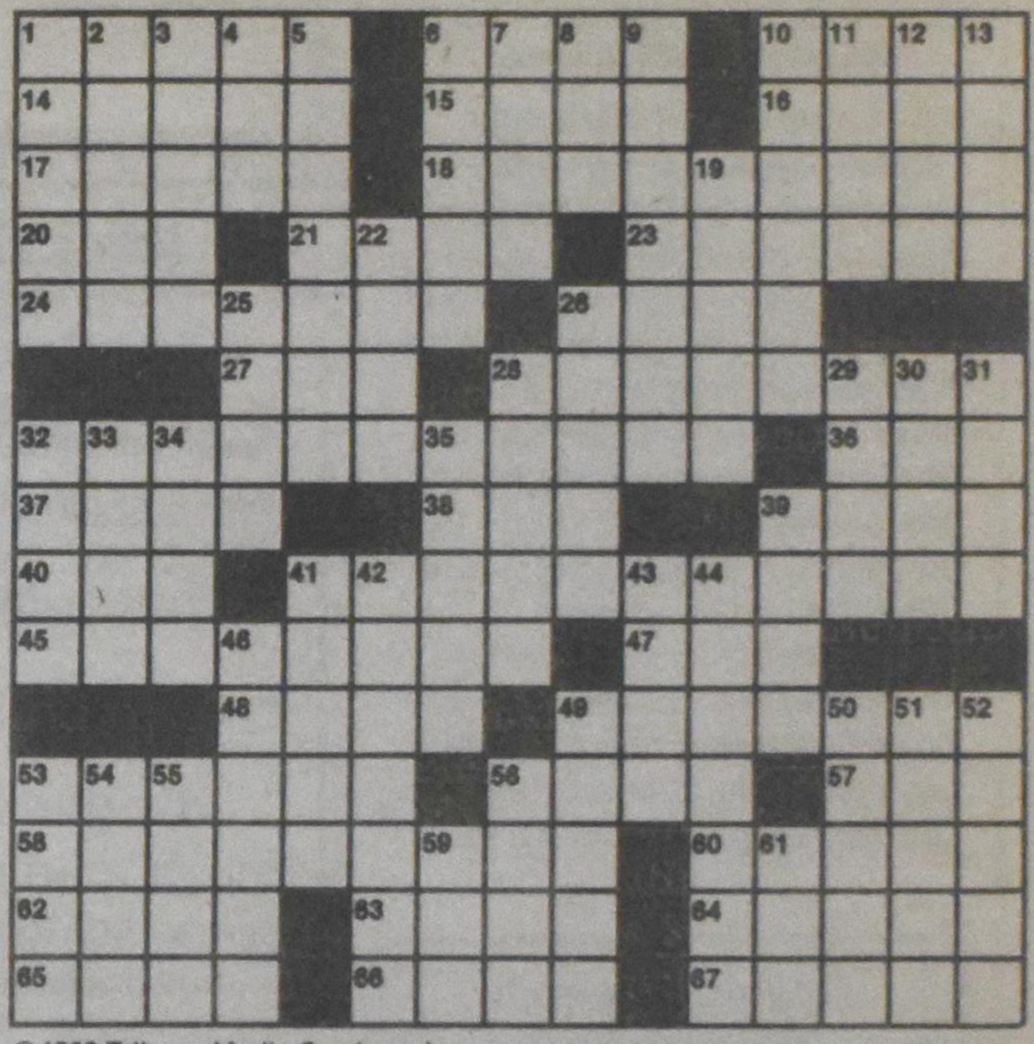
Weekly puzzle

by Florence C. Adler



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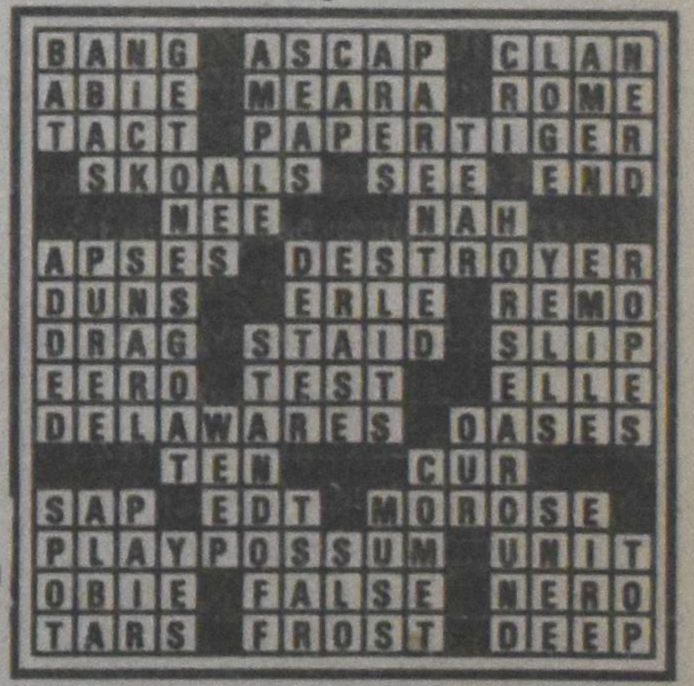
Last week's puzzle



Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Accepted

— to Bethany, Bloomfield, Ont., Rev. Herman Salomons of First Ladner, Delta, B.C.

— as associate pastor of Ancaster, Ont., and executive director of Salem Christian Mental Health Association, Mississauga, Ont., Rev. Albert Dreise, of Calvary, Flamborough, Ont.

Address change

Maranatha CRC, Edmonton, has a new **mailing** address. Mail all church correspondence to: Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Box 20008, Beverly Postal Outlet, Edmonton, AB T5W 5E6.

News

Christmas display at Domino's draws lawsuit

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (EP) — A Christian Christmas Celebration Light Display planned at the headquarters of the Domino's Pizza Corporation has drawn a lawsuit from community leaders in Ann Arbor Township. They claim the display is a public nuisance and violates the doctrine of separation of church and state.

The township's board of trustees is seeking a court order barring the display at Domino's Farms. Township leaders argue that the traffic attracted by a large light display will clog roads, inconvenience area homeowners, and possibly require township officials to close off public streets — an action the complaint says would violate church-state separation by requiring "government to participate in a religious display."

Domino's founder, Thomas S. Monaghan is a devout Catholic and is ready to fight for his right to erect a Christian Christmas display on his private property. "I'm not going to back away from this," he told EP News. "It could go all the way to the Supreme Court."

The controversial display began some years ago on a much smaller scale as holiday decorations at Domino's Farms, primarily for the enjoyment of the employees of the world's largest pizza delivery company.

In 1987 the display had grown to include 270,000 lights in a spectacle that attracted 150,000 vehicles carrying about 400,000 people. The "Blessed Christmas" display was cancelled for 1988 when Domino's agreed to work with community leaders to solve traffic problems.

This year, the township filed a complaint in Washtenaw County Circuit Court.

Rigorous ordinance

Mantel says the ordinance passed by the township goes beyond regulating such displays, and actually has the effect of forbidding certain forms of expression. "The ordinance says you need proper health, security, portajohns and control, which we did, but the intent of it is to legislate events that you have on your property. We maintain that the drive-through route is just that. It's county roads. We don't have anybody assemble on our property. People just drive by and look at it."

Thinking back to the beginnings of the controversial display, Monaghan says, "My wife is a real nut about Christmas, and I've always thought it was important to keep Christ in Christmas. I was aware of the problems with municipalities not being able to display creches because of the ACLU's attacks, so I thought, 'Here's a place where they can't do anything about it.' "

He recognizes the irony in that remark, in light of the current battle with the township's board of trustees.

About those who question his motives, Monaghan says, "There are people who say that I'm trying to bring publicity to the company and sell pizzas. In the past that was some of my justification for doing something I was going to do anyhow, but since all of this has come up and I may sell the company in the next two or three months anyhow, it won't help. Nobody can accuse me of doing this for commercial reasons."

Not a money-maker

He says the light show "goes beyond dollars and cents. It is a statement about my beliefs, I have always felt that we have taken Christ out of Christmas. It is going to be purely spiritual. There is not going to be a Santa Claus. There is not even going to be a sign for Domino's."

Ann Arbor Township Trustee Peter Davis dismisses Monaghan's claims to a right of free religious expression as "sanctimonious," and says "We're not talking about putting Christ back into Christmas. We're talking about getting people home from work."

Domino's Farms spent $29,000 on improvements to county roads to ease traffic problems, and is prepared to spend about $800,000 to present the free show this year. According to Monaghan, local authorities estimate that the crowds attracted by the display contribute about $11 million to the local economy.

If the display goes on as planned, the crowds it attracts will also contribute to various charities. Domino's Farms will accept contributions to benefit 10 charities, including World Vision, Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and others. Domino's Farms hopes to raise $100,000 to $150,000 for these groups with its Christmas display.

Though the Christmas light display is perhaps the most elaborate of the events and activities sponsored by Domino's Farms, the corporate headquarters also features a turn-of-the-century petting zoo featuring free programs for children, a class car museum, restaurants, Christmas tree sales benefiting the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, and various special events on weekends.

Think before you purchase food

TORONTO (MCCR) — Which consumer purchase is most frequently bought on impulse (eight times out of 10), eats up 15 per cent of the average weekly paycheque, but garners barely a glance from most financial advisers?

The answer is food. The latest figures from Statistics Canada show the average family spends about $5,000 a year to purchase foodstuffs, not including the 25 per cent of all meals eaten out of the home.

While the percentage of take-out and restaurant meals is increasing, food retailers and advertisers have developed profitable means to encourage impulse buying in the grocery store aisles.

According to Marilyn Gurevsky, a consumer advisor with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, consumers should take a few minutes to familiarize themselves with sales strategies. "The point isn't to spend a lot of your time plotting behind the grocery cart, but to be aware of the subtle manipulation at work."

Know the strategy

She says there are a number of techniques used to tempt shoppers; for instance, basic necessities such as meat, produce and dairy products are dispersed along outside walls, to encourage shoppers to cover as much of the store as possible.

Items with the highest price tag in their category are usually stocked at eye level, making top and bottom shelves worth a second look. Multiple pricing (2 for 99 cents) and other pricing methods are used to psychologically push the consumer into purchasing more than one item.

Makeshift signs, which use words such as 'Special' or 'New,' are often handwritten and suggest spur-of-the-moment bargains. And research shows food sells best when it is placed on end-aisle shelves, whether it's on sale or not.

Not all price breaks are bargains. Some stores often display the sale price next to the manufacturer's suggested retail price — but such artificial comparisons can be misleading.

Weekly advertised specials are among supermarkets' most effective selling techniques. By attracting customers with a sale item, retailers hope they will complete the rest of their weekly shopping in the store.

Prepare a list

"A carefully prepared shopping list in hand helps counteract the techniques used by the store to encourage unplanned purchases. Plan your weekly menu in advance, taking into account your budget, items already on hand, and weekly specials. Once your list is made, stick to it."

Treat Yourself or Someone Else to These Books

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The Strength of Their Years by Tymen E. Hofman $5.95 = $________
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Mentioned in the best-selling *The Canadian Encyclopedia.*
The Dutch immigrant pioneers in Alberta come alive in this book.

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48 pp. Illustrated. Quality paperback.
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Van Toen en Nu by Lini R. Grol $5.50 = $________
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Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Children

Children's books for Christmas

Reviewed by Doro J. Bakker

A Christmas Story, written and illustrated by Brian Wildsmith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. Hardcover, 32 pp., $17.50.

Almost 2000 years ago a little donkey was born in Nazareth. Soon after he was born, the donkey's mother left to go on a long journey with Mary and Joseph. This made the little donkey sad.

A Christmas Story tells how a young girl, Rebecca, and the donkey set out to find the donkey's mother. Their travels are long but eventful. They meet the shepherds who are keeping watch over their sheep. They hear glorious music filling the sky as the angels announce Jesus' birth. They see the great star shining down on Bethlehem.

When Rebecca and the donkey reach the stable they find not only the donkey's mother, but a newborn baby lying in a manger.

"What are you going to call him?" asked Rebecca.

"His name is Jesus," Mary replied.

Though we see some of the events of Christ's birth through Rebecca's eyes, Wildsmith tells the actual Christmas story in his magnificent illustrations. They are typical of his other works — breathtaking displays of brilliant colour. The gold illuminations found on each page add to the joy and majesty of the Christmas story.

I could barely get through the book as my children stalled to wonder at the richness of each page. If you can't get a child to share *A Christmas Story* with you, you'll be missing something!

The Nativity, illustrated by Juan Wijngaard. London: Walker Books, 1989. Hardcover, 29 pp., $14.95.

With passages from the gospels of Matthew and Luke and from the book of Isaiah,

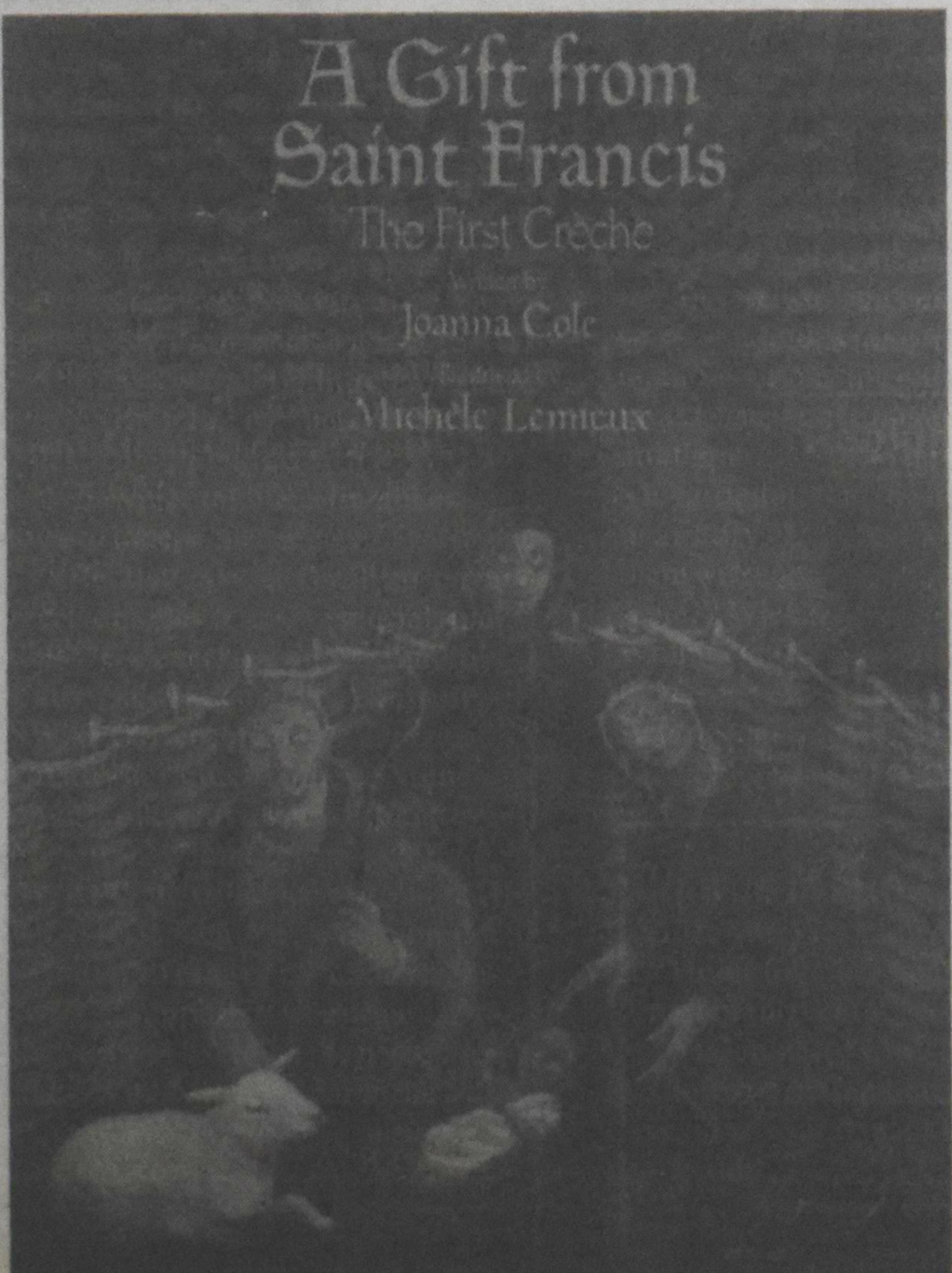
Juan Wijngaard relates the familiar story of Christmas. He begins with the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary and ends as Mary, Joseph and Jesus flee from Herod into Egypt.

Wijngaard beautifully illustrates the biblical passages he has chosen and frames each one to resemble a stained glass window. A striking effect!

The Nativity is another good book for all ages to enjoy during the Christmas season. The authorized King James Version of the Bible is used throughout.

A Gift From Saint Francis, Joanna Cole; illustrated by Michele Lemieux. Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd. 1989. Hardcover, 40 pp., $14.95.

Francis of Assisi was born in Italy over 800 years ago, a time when the rich and poor were deeply divided. Born the son of a rich nobleman, Francis' parents gave him everything he wanted. As he was growing up, Francis came to realize that happiness came from God. In time he turned his back on his



family's wealth to help the poor and share God's love with them.

One winter night, as he was travelling with one of his followers, Francis saw some shepherds sleeping in the moonlight. They reminded him of the shepherds to whom the angels first announced the birth of Jesus. Francis was filled with a deep longing to see the whole Christmas story and to share it with others. So on Christmas Eve, he called all the townspeople to a wooded hill outside the city. Francis had made a beautiful Nativity scene, the first creche, a gift for all to enjoy.

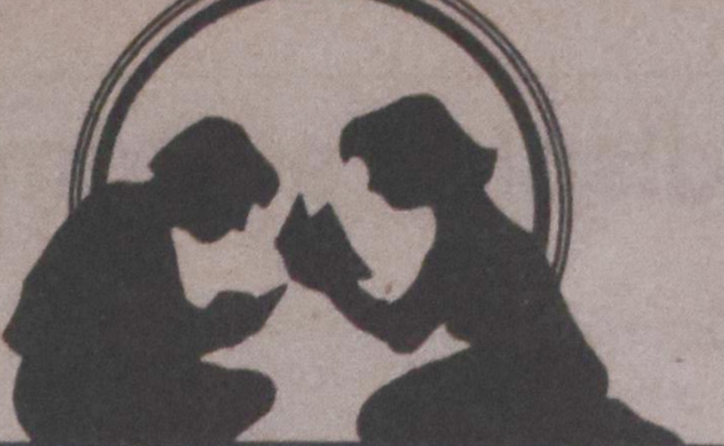
Saint Francis' gift lives on. People all around the world continue to set up Nativity scenes — a symbol of the hope, peace and joy that Jesus Christ brought.

Joanna Cole portrays the life of Saint Francis faithfully and beautifully. Children will feel the warmth and love of this humble man who spent his life serving the Lord through his service to the poor. Cole's text is warm and uncluttered.

Michele Lemieux has illustrated *A Gift From Saint Francis* in rich oils. Her work captures the spirit of Italian medieval art.

A Gift From Saint Francis is an outstanding picture book for all ages. I'm sure it will become a favourite, one to be shared with children year after year. The story, simply told and the illustrations, skilfully rendered allow the timeless story of Christmas to speak for itself.

Doro J. Bakker lives in Orangeville, Ont.



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Light

"The Lord is my light and my salvation!" **(Ps. 27:1)**

It was a night to remember! Five school buddies at a friend's home overnight! Pizza and popcorn (more than I had ever stuffed into myself!), a late movie on television, and then the stories. Who could tell the scariest tale? We outdid one another with false bravado!

Was it just my imagination? Sure, it was night outside, but wasn't the dark creeping closer? What lurked in the shadows just beyond the weakening glimmer of the lamps? Our bodies were tired, but our minds raced with fear.

Dark night of the soul

We've all been there. Dark nights. Ghostly fears. Terrifying images.

And even when we "grow up," something haunting often lingers at the edges of our brightest days. Francis Bacon said, "Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other!" And Tennyson saw himself, in one of his poems, as

An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry!

When the German poet Goethe lay dying, his last words were a terrified shout: "Light! Light! I need more light!" The final fears of short story writer O. Henry (William Sidney Porter) came out this way: "Turn up the lights! I don't want to go home in the dark!" And those who have faced death and loneliness nod silently with F. Scott Fitzgerald's lament: "In the real dark night of the soul it is always 3 o'clock in the morning."

A lantern in the night

There is much in Psalm 27 that dances in delight. David's bravado in the face of enemies (vss. 2-3), his enjoyment of worship at the temple (vs. 4), and his confident trust in God (vss. 5-6) are ringing examples of faith at it's finest.

But they are edged by fear: fear of loneliness (vs. 9), fear of rumors (vs. 12), fear of alienation from family (vs. 10), fear of crime and violence (vs. 12), fear even that his religion is useless and faulty (vss. 7, 9). And in the dark night of his soul, David sits with us sharing the tales that have kept us awake too: "Why don't my children call or visit anymore?" "How will I cope with this divorce?" "I don't know how I'll make ends meet till my next unemployment cheque." "Why did God allow this to happen to us?"

Where is God? "Don't hide your face from me!" cries David (vs. 9). In the blackness, in the bleakness, we need to sense his presence. We need to know that he is there, even if, like Job, we don't understand what's happening around us and inside of us. "The restless millions wait the Light," sais George Bernanos, "Whose dawning maketh all things new."

Voyage of the Dawntreader

Caught in a darkness at sea, too terrifying for words, a darkness that crawled and oozed and grabbed and stuck, the children of C.S. Lewis' Narnia world sailed their ship, the Dawntreader, in circles of fear. "... If you've ever loved us at all," cried Lucy to the skies, "send us help now!"

And in a growing speck of light that seemed, Lucy thought, to look a lot like a cross, the battle of the powers whirled around them, till Darkness and fear melted before His Brightness.

"God is Light," said the Apostle John, echoing David's song. And no Darkness in this world has ever held back his dawning!

A tender child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stair timidly,
'O Mother! take my hand,' said she,
'And then the dark will all be light.'
We older children grope our way,
From dark behind to dark before:
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore.
Reach downward to the sunless days,
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
And faith is small and hope delays:
Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of Thee!

John Greenleaf Whittier

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.